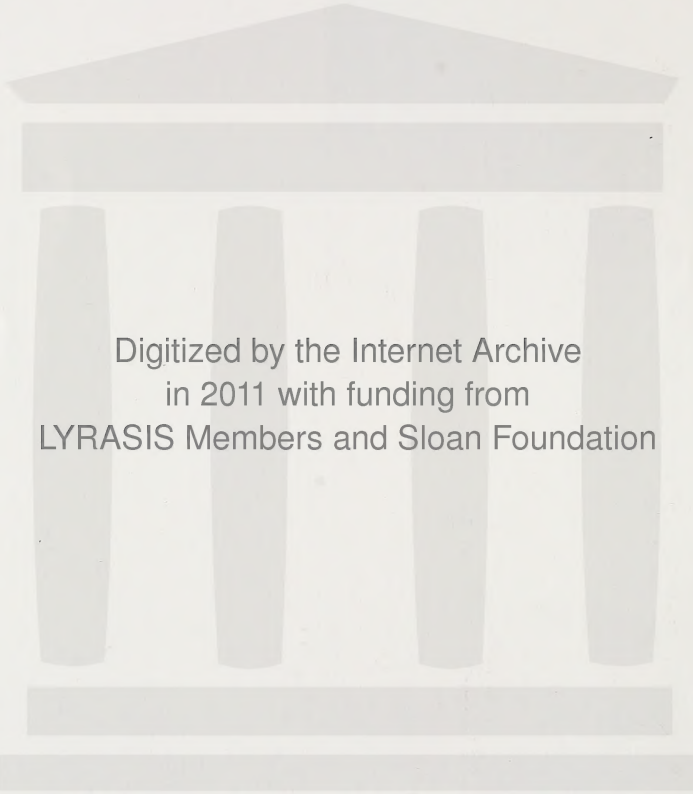


# SPIRITAN*LIFE* *VIE*SPIRITAINE

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**"The Spirit of the Risen Lord,  
working in the Church and in the world,  
gives life and direction to our entire apostolic life".**

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We remind readers that the articles published in SPIRITAN LIFE express the opinions of their authors and not necessary those of the Editor.

## FOREWORD

Preparations for the General Chapter of 1992 are now under way. It is a good moment at which to raise up anything which can help us towards a unified vision of our past. That is why we open this number of *SPIRITAN LIFE* with something about "the roots of our roots."

All over the world today the **refugee** question is dramatic. In Africa it is especially horrifying, involving an ever larger number of people. The account of Desmond Arigho's unusual journey helps remind us of the plight of so many and also of our confrères who are engaged in helping them.

Frans Timmermans brings us right into this refugee world, where, as Refugee Coordinator for the Regional Episcopal Conference for Southern Africa (IMBISA), he lets us see all sides of pastoral work for these particularly abandoned men, women and children.

Refugee work is one present-day aspect of mission which answers a special need. *Redemptoris Missio* (December 1990) reminds us that Mission uses a variety of paths according to a diversity of situations. In the Islamic context in which he lives, René You points the way to one of those paths. He speaks of the missionary spirituality which he was gradually led to experience through dialogue with Muslim neighbours. Now that the Generalate is studying conditions for the possibility of expansion among peoples of the great religions of Asia, seems a propitious moment for bringing to the attention of anglophone Spiritans René's article which appeared in *SPIRITUS* N° 121, (December 1990).



About twenty Spiritans who work in "**First Evangelization**," will meet at Chevilly, in France, from the 18 to the 23 of November next, to share their experiences and make common recommendations. On this occasion it might be asked whether the meaning we Spiritans have, in the past, given to the expression "First Evangelization," is still acceptable today. David Regan presents some reflections which could lead to a change in vocabulary.

Our vocabulary should evolve together with our understanding of mission. The vocation "to announce the Good News of the Kingdom," (SRL 1), should lead us to keep on developing our understanding of the term "**evangelization**". Here Chukwuma Okoye's article offers us food for reflection.

*Spiritan News* N° 84 announced two Spiritan meetings for June 1991 in Pittsburg: one for "Lay Associates" and the other for "Spiritan Educators." Quite a few Spiritans working in Africa were amongst those invited. Eugene Hillman reminds participants, and all of us, that the **Justice and Peace** dimension has its place, today, in all forms of educational activity.

In July it was the turn of Spiritan "Formators" to meet, in S.I.S.T., Nigeria. The questions raised here in a non-academic way, by Antonio Gruyters, Novice Master in Brazil, could help formators continue the reflection. The article, and its sequel, should be of interest to all those whose work brings them into contact with the "sects," not just in Latin America, but in Africa and elsewhere.

The 1992 General Chapter will be held in Brazil, at Itaici, near Campinas, in the State of São Paulo. Next year also sees the **Fifth Centenary** of Columbus' arrival in America and of the evangelization of the area. How should we commemorate that event: five-hundred years of the history -- of civil and religious

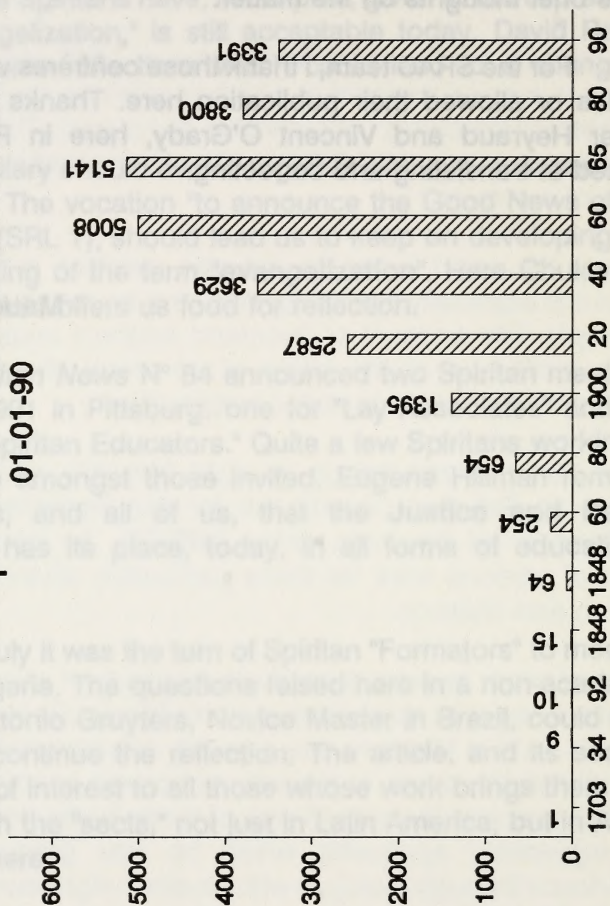


life -- of that continent? What should delegates think about the lot of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, or of the Africans, brought there in chains to serve the colonies? The Spiritan Research and Animation Team, (SRAC) contributes with some brief thoughts on the matter.

For the SRAC team, I thank those confrères who sent us articles or allowed their publication here. Thanks go also to Roger Heyraud and Vincent O'Grady, here in Rome, who worked at translating and correcting.

**Maurice Gobeil**

# Nombre de Spiritains depuis la Fondation Number of Spiritans Since Foundation



## **THIS IS WHERE WE CAME FROM**

Some time ago a novice master sent me a short historical résumé of Spiritan Tradition as he imparts it to his novices. This tradition, beginning at the start of our history with Poullart des Places, is embodied today in those whom he is training for the future. This is a heartening example of the kind of thing one would hope for, precisely from all those responsible for formation.

Spiritan tradition was in fact born at the feet of the Black Virgin of Paris, *Notre-Dame de Bonne Délivrance*, on the 27th of May, 1703. "The work was consecrated to the Holy Spirit and placed under the protection of Mary Immaculate. That was our starting point," said Monsignor Le Roy in 1903 on the occasion of the second centenary of the foundation of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup>.

That tradition, with its accompanying spirituality, has endured in a dynamic continuity and cannot be restricted to any one period or culture or particular language. That is the very condition in virtue of which it remains a "Living Tradition".

### **Heritage, Fidelity and Innovation**

This living tradition is in part the heritage which has been bequeathed to us by those who made our history. It is a combination of human and spiritual wisdom embodied in all those witnesses who have gone before us, from Poullart des

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<sup>1</sup> Mgr Le Roy, in B.G., XXII, No 195, Mai 1903, p. 125.



Places, our Founder, through Libermann our Restorer<sup>2</sup>, who were capable of responding to the needs of their times through the love of God and of their neighbour. For us, as for them, this tradition has taken the form of an active response to new missionary situations (S.R.L., 85). Furthermore, it has been composed at one and the same time of loyalty to the tradition and willingness to innovate, as Teilhard de Chardin has so well said:

*A loyalty attentive to the lessons of the past, because it is from that past that the present derives whatever reality it retains, thus determining amidst the most pressing changes, both the limits of their inevitable novelty and the means to both the limits of their inevitable novelty and the means to accomplish them. But it remains true that progress alone truly respects tradition, because progress alone ensures the perpetuation of tradition as a living thing<sup>3</sup>.*

## The Myth Of a New Society

We are no longer in the epoch of Schwindenhammer who fabricated "the myth of the new society" originating in 1848<sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> Fr Lithard, in his book, *Spiritualité Spiritaine*, Paris, Maison Mère, 30, rue Lhomond, 1938, p. 16, first used the epithet. The author rightly points out that it in no way diminishes the importance of Libermann, since the task of restoration can be more difficult than that of foundation. This title seems to me more historically correct than "Founders", the word used on the title page and which has been adopted for our Spiritan Rule of Life, Nos. 12, 99.4, 100, 193, 199.

<sup>3</sup> In CHRISTUS, April 1967, pp. 245-246.

<sup>4</sup> Koren H., *To the Ends of the Earth A General History of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost*, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1983, p. 350.



or of Fr Le Vavas seur who, in spite of being a member of the General Council, continued for ten years to sign the reports of the Council as "Priest of the Holy Heart of Mary"<sup>5</sup>. And indeed even today one can occasionally hear confreres who express themselves in such doubtful terms: for instance, in such comments as "but what was there before 1848?"; "Poullart and those others wrote nothing.....". Or indeed, as someone said recently, "I have always heard it said that the Holy Ghost Fathers sent only second class priests on the missions.... why should we take any interest in them"?

People often speak of "Libermann spirituality" as if it meant "spiritan spirituality"; indeed we sometimes claim to be giving our young men a spiritan spirituality in teaching them an approach drawn exclusively from the writings of Libermann. This, it seems to me, is to take the part for the whole, however important that part is. Even whole communities may share in this attitude, celebrating the 2nd of February with solemnity and allowing the 2nd of October to go by quite unnoticed (S.R.L., 99.4). Probably each one of us could, from personal experience, give examples of behaviour or attitudes exemplifying this way of seeing things and of observing, as Mgr Le Roy once said "that the history of the Congregation, up to now, is unknown to them"<sup>6</sup>.

## Return To The Wellsprings?

Spirit an writing, both historical and spiritual, is full of ambiguous statements or of facts which have influenced many generations of Spiritans and have led them to a truncated vision of our true history and of our spirituality. If we do not speak accurately

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<sup>5</sup> Koren, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>6</sup> Note de Mgr Le Roy au Père Cabon, août 1928.

about these matters, we end by throwing everything into confusion.

Are our wellsprings now so muddled that we must examine them anew? We cannot rewrite our history, but we can reinterpret it, something we have not yet done. Jean-Claude Pariat, in his report on the "Spiritan Youth Month" held at Saverne in August 1990, seems to confirm this contention when he writes:

*Those in charge of formation and indeed the places of formation themselves transmit only a part of the spiritan tradition. We need to re-evaluate the means by which our young confreres can integrate themselves into the spiritan identity in our apostolic work and in the collective memory of our Congregation.*

## **Towards An Understanding**

It is easy to understand the filial and sentimental attachment of former members to the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary after the union. It was Libermann who had made possible the realisation of the dreams of Le Vavas seur and Tisserant and the gathering of many members of the former "Bands of Piety" around himself. He had even conferred on them their own proper rule of life which gave them security and a sense of belonging. The members knew only one Father even though the pious association was, in fact, quite without any legal or canonical standing<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Legrain Michel, *Une Union de Congrégations au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: Le Saint-Esprit et le Saint-Coeur de Marie*, Paris, Institut Catholique, 1965, p. 131. The two Rules (1734 and 1849) should be considered as basic Spiritan Rules. See Daly J., *SPIRITAN WELLSPRINGS The Original Rule, with Commentaries, of the Holy Ghost Congregation*, Dublin, Paraclete Press, 1986.

Schwindenhammer, who came afterwards and who boasted of having scoured the archives of the former Congregation of the Holy Spirit<sup>8</sup>, is harder to excuse. The civil authorities had, on many occasions, drawn his attention to the dangers of fostering the myth of a new society<sup>9</sup>. This mentality has been solidly entrenched. Even Mgr Le Roy's emendations at a time of legal difficulties with the French government in 1901, or the solemn declarations of the chapter of 1918 hardly brought about any change.

Right up to the time of the Second World War, generations of Spiritans went through the process of formation without any reference to the decisions of 1918, with no readjustment of point of view, fed an exclusive diet of Libermann's letters. The young and not so young in the period after the war are a different breed, and, with certain fortunate exceptions, quickly found themselves alienated permanently by a Libermann presented to them as a sort of monument which one should visit only from the inside<sup>10</sup>. Their mindset and their ideas had changed more quickly than those of their spiritual mentors.

How many Spiritans, as soon as they were launched on the way of salvation, have searched everywhere except at the wellsprings of the Congregation for a spirituality which would relate to their personal experience! For many confreres, this was the cause of their difficulty in finding a Spiritan Identity.

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<sup>8</sup> Lettre circulaire du T.R.P. Schwindenhammer, No 1, 2 Février 1854, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Legrain, *op. cit.*, 177-179.

<sup>10</sup> The phrase is Paul Coulon's



## A First Step

The publication in English and French of Alphonse Gilbert's *You Have Laid Your Hand Upon Me*, although it did not convert everyone, certainly helped by its fresh and levelheaded approach to reconcile many confreres to Libermann. Perhaps even more than Spiritans, lay people who were introduced to this little book quickly discovered in it a Libermann who is alive, relevant and full of psychological and spiritual treasures.

The collective work entitled *LIBERMANN* represents an important step forward in this new development. Libermann is no longer the centre, but a very special participant in a particular moment of our history<sup>11</sup>. Now we await a sequel which will tell us what Libermann and his followers gained from their entry into the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and about the mature Libermann of the years 1848-1852.

## A Second Step

Following a decision of the Chapter of 1986, the General Council decided on the 3rd of November 1988 to ask Fr Jean Savoie to introduce the cause of Fr Poullart des Places with the Archdiocese of Paris. The effect of this action will be, we hope, to stimulate research and a better knowledge of our Founder and first Superior General. The history of the labourers of the first hour who continued the work of Poullart during the 145 years which preceded the union has been written by Le Floch, Koren and Michel, but there still remains the task of shedding greater light on the spiritual heritage of those workers, a heritage which is still too little known.

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Coulon, Paule Brasseur et collaborateurs, *LIBERMANN 1802 - 1852. Une pensée et une mystique missionnaires*, Paris, Cerf, 1988, p. 13.



## Real Union Yet To Be Realised

As Fr. Lithard has written, Spiritan Spirituality forms a close-knit unity, something which makes it all the more precious. Libermann, the Restorer of our Congregation, follows closely along the lines established by our Founder<sup>12</sup>. This is the truth that will become reality for us on the day that we achieve true union, the day that our spirituality is no longer that of Poullart or of Libermann, but Spiritan Spirituality.

Each one of us constitutes a living history and we cannot find our identity, we cannot possess a present or a future, if we blot out or ignore all or part of our past. The same holds true for societies. Like Old Testament history and the history of the church which is its sequel, the history of our origins is made up of words and events which it is not up to us to accept or reject as we see fit. Even the most negative experiences can teach us a great deal of wisdom.

This can also be, for us Spiritans, an important means of achieving unity about fundamentals. It is sometimes sad to see how this understanding of our history, for reasons of sentiment or ideology, can beget division, faction or opposition, even if this comes about unintentionally or indirectly.

Mgr Le Roy's appeal for unity, perhaps made somewhat impatiently, is still relevant: "There is a choice to be made: either not to become a member of the Congregation, or to take it as one finds it, with its history, its development, its organisation, its objectives. This is the only way to remain united and faithful to our motto: ***Cor Unum et Anima Una***<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Lithard, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Lettre circulaire No. 21, mars 1920, pp. 5-6.

In 1970, Fr. Lecuyer wrote in the Superior General's message:

*Spiritane spirituality should be given a special place of honour in our heritage. Its general outline was traced during the time of Claude Poullart des Places; Father Libermann enriched it enormously, but we must remember that it evolved and deepened during the course of our history... We cannot, however, be genuine messengers of this spirituality unless we live it ourselves<sup>14</sup>.*

For each of us, surely, the challenge is this: that "our unity should bear witness to reconciliation", made possible for everyone in Christ (S.R.L., 37). We are called unceasingly to reinvent our Mission, remembering from where we come and who we are.

**Maurice Gobeil**  
**Rome**

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<sup>14</sup> In General Bulletin No 52, p. 333.

## **PROMOTION**

### **NEW "SPIRITAN PICTURES"**

Thanks to the initiative of the Province of France with the collaboration of the Spiritan Center of Research and Animation, Rome, new pictures of Poullart des Places, Libermann, Laval and Brottier have just been printed.

They are in colour with a prayer at the back (format 6.5 X 15 cm).

You are invited to order from the following addresses:

French version.....**Economat provincial**  
**30 rue Lhomond**  
**75005 PARIS, FRANCE**

Single individual.....25 FF/100

Poullart and Libermann together.....50 FF/100

English version.....**Spiritan Sources**  
**Clivo di Cinna 195**  
**00136 ROMA, ITALIA**

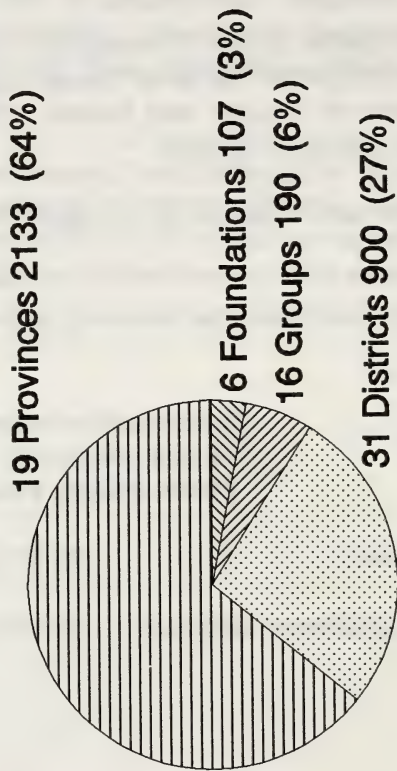
Single individual.....\$5.00/100

Poullart and Libermann together.....\$10.00/100



# DISTRIBUTION OF SPIRITANS

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Total: 3330 (01/01/91)

Are not included in this total: the 36 members of the  
Generalate and French Seminary.

## **FROM CARRICK-ON-SUIR TO ROME**

A short time ago, I offered my services to do pastoral work in a refugee camp in Zambia, at the request of Fr. Kevin Doheny C.S.Sp., Secretary General of the new international organisation, "REFUGEE YEAR 89/90". While spending a few months on leave in Ireland, I thought it might be a good idea to spend a few weeks on a cycle tour of Portugal. But look what happened to my original plan!

"Instead of going to Portugal, how about going to Rome under the auspices of 'REFUGEE YEAR 89/90' and helping us with publicity and fund-raising for our organisation?" This was Fr. Doheny's suggestion when he heard of my intention of going to Portugal on my bike. After a couple of days thinking about it, I agreed to this. To Rome I would go, and make this journey part of my effort on behalf of the refugees.

The next thing was the setting up of a publicity and fund-raising campaign to aid the project. The idea was to raise people's awareness of the growing problem of the refugees and to collect money on behalf of "REFUGEE YEAR 89/90". The Raleigh bicycle company donated a bike which would carry me all the way.

## **CARRICK-ON-SUIR**

To highlight the whole project in Ireland we decided to have the journey begin in Carrick-On- Suir, the native town of Sean Kelly, the well-known Irish racing cyclist, who competes on the European circuit. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 11th of September, I started on the first stage of my journey towards Dublin, leaving the town accompanied by a long line of young biking enthusiasts. All along the route I received many personal gifts, as well as contributions from people towards the fund-raising project. The Lord Mayor of Dublin came to the Airport to wish me Godspeed, as I boarded the plane that would take me to Liverpool.

## **LIVERPOOL to NEWHAVEN**

My English itinerary had been organised ahead of my arrival and included many stops to celebrate Mass in various parishes and do some fund-raising. It took me twelve days, including eight days of actual pedalling, to reach Newhaven where I took the ferry for Dieppe in France.

## **DIEPPE to PARIS**

Once I got to France I was on my own as regards support and I felt very much alone in a country where I did not speak the language. There was a little uneasiness creeping in.....from now on I was on my own, left to my own resources. It took me three days of hard pedalling to get to the Mother House in



Paris. I arrived there for First Vespers of the Feast of Claude Poullart des Places, Founder of the Spiritans, on the first of October. I participated in the solemn mass in honour of our Founder on the following day and also witnessed the blessing of two new statues of Blessed Jacques Laval and Blessed Daniel Brottier, near the monument to Poullart and the tomb of Libermann in the chapel at rue Lhomond. This area of the chapel makes an interesting memorial for us Spiritans. It was a wonderful experience for me to participate in this ceremony and to be able to rest up for a few days in one of our own houses.

## **PARIS to NICE**

I was feeling a little bit apprehensive, after leaving that hospitable resting place, about the challenging fifteen days ahead of me on the road to Nice. All those difficulties were in my mind as I looked ahead: wind, rain, steep mountain roads, cars and lorries...

Many a time I was tempted by the idea of calling it quits, since strictly speaking only the section from Dublin to Newhaven was needed for fund-raising purposes. But I had promised all my supporters in Ireland and England that I would carry them in my prayers the whole way to Rome and right on to my appointment with the Pope. Neither could I forget all the refugees and displaced persons all over the world. It's estimated that there are 40 million displaced persons globally, of whom 15 million are refugees, many of them living in camps. I felt I couldn't let them down. I must persevere with the challenge.

Every day began with prayer which continued for four or five hours along the road. Depending on weather and road conditions, I covered a distance varying between 50 and 120 Kms daily. Every afternoon, as the end of my day's journey drew near, the same thought would preoccupy me: where will I spend the night? I had to find accommodation in a youth hostel or a modest hotel where I could celebrate Mass. This daily search taught me to appreciate all over again the pleasure there is in the most fundamental things in life: water for drinking and washing, simple food, a decent bed and the kindness of people from whom I would enquire about accommodation or ask for directions.

From beginning to end of the journey I must have asked directions of about 400 people. In all that number, only one person reacted ungraciously or impatiently to my questions, and even he relented, came back to apologize and to help me. I think my cyclist's outfit made me more approachable. A journey of these proportions will inevitably raise some problems. I had to deal with nine punctures and two falls which could have been quite nasty. Once, while trying to avoid some broken glass, I fell right in the middle of the road. Luckily, no car was passing at the time. The second time I fell was while steering clear of a juggernaut: this time I fell into a ditch full of brambles.

## **ITALY... and finally... ROME**

On the seventeenth of October I crossed the Italian frontier. I had decided to follow the magnificent mediterranean coastal

route, but most of the nine days that it took me to get to Rome from here were days of torrential rain. Late in the afternoon of the 25th of October I arrived at our Generalate House. I had done what I set out to do. Still to come was my audience with the Pope where I would ask his blessing on all the refugees and on all the good people whose contributions to our fund-raising had kept me going during that marathon of 2695 kilometres which were clocked up on my faithful bike.

### **The Papal Audience**

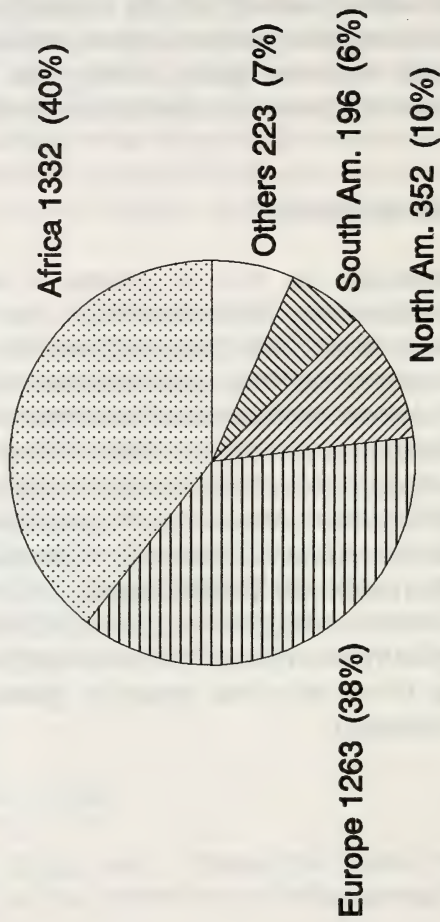
On Wednesday the 31st of October I was received at the general audience by Pope John Paul II in the Hall of Paul VI. There I was, among the Bishops, Cardinals and Ambassadors right up at the front. They were all attired in their official dress. The expressions on their faces were priceless as they looked at me standing there among them in my cycling gear. With feelings of joy and pride, deeply conscious of the honour bestowed on me, I shook the Pope's hand. While the other people at the audience held out their medals, rosaries and crosses to receive the Papal blessing, my mind was filled with thoughts of the refugees scattered all over the world, but especially of those in Zambia whom I would soon be living with, and of all those who had given so generously to our fund-raising campaign.

**Desmond Arigho**  
**Zambia**



# Geographical distribution of Spiritans

Total Members on 01/01/91: 3366



## **REFUGEES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

### **A region not quite unknown to Spiritans**

Many years have passed since the first German Spiritans arrived in the Republic of South Africa. They seldom hit the headlines in the papers or on TV. They work in one of the rural areas in South Africa: the Orange Free State, which has never been one of the hot points in the struggle for liberation. Still they have contributed, and still contribute, in their own way, to the birth of a new South Africa. After the Civil War in Nigeria a group of Irish Spiritans came to Zambia, later followed by Nigerian confreres, and by members of the East African Foundation.

In 1985 the Nigerian Spiritans opened their first Mission in Zimbabwe. They are eight now, and more are coming. Myself, I arrived in Zimbabwe in 1987 as Coordinator for the Refugee Department of the Regional Bishops' Conference (IMBISA). Several Spiritans are involved with me in refugee work: Fr. Conor Kennedy in Malawi, Fr. M van Koolwijk in Zambia, Fr. Jude Uche and Fr. Venantius Eke in Zimbabwe.

### **The region.**

"Southern Africa" is the region which comprises not only South Africa, but also the independent states of Swaziland and Lesotho, as well as the "front-line states" of Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia and also Botswana. Swaziland and Lesotho are, by their very geographical situation, almost satellites of South Africa, which to a large extent controls their economies as well as their national and

international politics. This is less true of Botswana, which has managed to steer a more independent course, although it is economically much more dependent upon South Africa than countries like Angola, Mozambique or Zimbabwe.

### **The political context**

Up to 1975, date of the independence of Angola and Mozambique, South Africa was surrounded by a protective belt of friendly countries: the two then still Portuguese colonies, as well as Rhodesia with its white racist government and Namibia, considered a colony of South Africa. With the independence of Angola and Mozambique, and in 1980 with the independence of Zimbabwe, the situation changed. South Africa had now as neighbors two declared Marxist governments, and another which claimed to be socialist.

Together with Zambia (the former Northern Rhodesia) these countries pledged their unwavering support for the oppressed black and colored population in South Africa and Namibia, and led a diplomatic battle in the UN against the South African regime, calling for its political and economic isolation. South Africa retaliated with a declared policy of "total strategy", aimed at maintaining its neighbors in a state of total economic dependance, and at de-stabilizing their political and economic structures. To that effect it gave full financial and military support to the opposition movement in Angola: UNITA (União Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola), one of the three original liberation movements, led by Jonas Savimbi.

In Mozambique RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) brought together in an opposition movement a number of people who felt betrayed or left out by the former FRELIMO movement (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique), now the ruling party. RENAMO was organized and financed by the



Rhodesian Secret Service, as is reported by the former Rhodesian Intelligence Chief Ken Flower, in his book "Serving Secretly". After Rhodesia had become independent Zimbabwe, South Africa took on the role of RENAMO's sponsor.

### **"Total strategy"**

Thus, since their independence, both Angola and Mozambique have known a guerilla war which resulted in untold sufferings and ruthless destruction of the entire infrastructure of both countries, as is well visible to anyone who visits there. Communications are totally disrupted: one can only travel by air in both countries, except for the immediate surroundings of the major centers. Electric power from the Cabora Bassa Dam in Northern Mozambique, which could cater for the needs in energy of the entire country, cannot be used because of the systematic destruction of power lines. Misery and the breakdown of the educational and health systems are the plight of the simple people everywhere. Sixty percent of rural schools and health centers in Mozambique have been destroyed.

Total insecurity and banditry made it impossible for the rural population to cultivate their fertile lands. In Angola, South African troops have been involved for many years in open warfare in the Southern part of Angola. Since independence 600,000 people have died in the war in Mozambique, and 350,000 in Angola. Official statistics in Angola report a number of 50,000 disabled people, victims of war and of land mines. Mozambique has no such statistics, but the plight of the rural population in the guerilla war was very much the same.

## **Mozambican refugees**

In 1983 - 1984 a large portion of Mozambique fell victim to a severe draught, adding to the already bad situation in the rural areas and causing an outright famine. Mozambique, plagued by economic difficulties and a collapse of communications, was unable to come to the aid of its citizens. That was the beginning of a massive exodus from the country into the neighboring countries of Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and some of the homelands of South Africa. As time went by, and the war in Mozambique became ever more murderous, the stream of refugees kept increasing.

There are now more than one million refugees in Malawi, and 180,000 in Zimbabwe. Nobody knows the exact numbers of those who have fled to South Africa: this country does not accept refugees. Some 50,000 are in the homelands bordering Mozambique, but other tens of thousands are in South Africa, where they look for work in the mines and in the big farms, with forged identity documents, which are not difficult to come by. South Africa does not mind, as long as this does not involve any official act of recognition of the refugee situation: these refugees will keep quiet and will not cause any political trouble. The total number of Mozambican refugees outside their country is officially 900,000 (Statistics from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or UNHCR) but realistic estimates are nearer to 1,400,000.

## **Displaced persons**

The war situation inside the country has also driven millions of people from the interior towards all the major cities: Maputo, Beira, Quelimane, Tete, Nampula. As a matter of fact the population of these cities has sometimes more than doubled.

In Maputo the number of squatters around the city is more than a million. They have erected huge slums around these cities, often without any community services, without water, electricity, sanitation. The schools and hospitals, already overstretched in the cities, could not be extended due to the economic collapse, and so schools are working in three turns a day, hospitals and clinics cannot cope.

### **Angolan refugees and displaced persons**

The situation is very much the same in Angola, and for the same reasons. Angola has known a severe draught in a large part of its territory for two years. It has less people outside its borders (the Angolan refugees in Zaire and Zambia are estimated at some 300,000) but it has more internally displaced people. Exact figures are impossible to give, but a realistic estimate gives statistics of up to two million and more for both Angola and Mozambique.

### **The situation of the refugees**

Those outside their country enjoy the protection and the support of the international community: UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), World Food Programme, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), etc. In all neighboring countries they have been given the official status of refugees, with the recognition of particular rights. They have been given food and shelter. Although it is often difficult to organize food transport in such a way as to ensure a balanced diet for so many people, their situation is, from a viewpoint of alimentation, health care and sanitation, quite reasonable. Of course, there are many non-material needs which are often not catered for: the psychological and spiritual effects of organized violence, violent separation of families, the fact of being



uprooted, the feeling of being useless and unwanted, the frictions, at times, with the local populations.

Children are a particularly vulnerable group among the refugees. Many of them suffer from the psychological effects of the violence they have undergone or witnessed. Countless numbers of them are orphans. Schools in the camps are very poor and secondary education is non-existent. It is in the field of all these non-material needs that the churches see an important task and responsibility, together with UNICEF and with a number of NGO's (Non Governmental Organization), like Save the Children, Oxfam, Caritas, ecumenical church organizations and others.

### **The particular ordeal of displaced persons**

The displaced persons: those who are on the run inside their own country, are in a much more desperate position. They do not have the status of "refugees" which would guarantee them the protection and material support of the international community. Their governments are in such a desperate economic situation that very little can be done for these people. Often money, destined for the displaced people, finds its way to other parts of the government's budget, such as the war. Corruption is rampant, as so often where war and misery have created an uncontrollable situation.

Repeatedly the United Nations have been approached in order to find a way to obtain access to these people for their relief. In August 1988, SARRED, an important international political conference in Oslo, sent an official request to the Secretary General of the UN to that effect. The Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the Southern African Region have repeatedly done the same, and so have other NGO's. The answer has

been, up to now, that the matter is being studied.

### **South African exiles**

A part from these Angolan and Mozambican refugees, there are also some 30,000 South African exiles outside their country. These belong mostly to one of the liberation movements. They are urban refugees. Many of them receive scholarships, inside the Southern African region, or in countries outside Africa.

### **The role of the Churches**

Usually the Churches have been the first to recognize the magnitude of the refugee problem, and to call the attention of governments and of the international organizations to the plight of these people and to the responsibility of the international community. Often governments have been slow in recognizing them as "refugees", with the particular rights attached to that category by international law and conventions. The Churches have come to the aid of the refugees until the official organizations had put their act together. They have - sometimes hesitantly - defended the rights of these people where injustice was done to them. They have tried to sensitize their own flock in order to receive them as brothers and sisters and to extend to them their love and their care: that, too, is not always very easy.

They have tried in many places to make sure that pastoral care was given, and that the church communities in the camps were supported and their leaders assisted in their pastoral task. Unfortunately some sectarian groups have not resisted the temptation to abuse the psychological frailty of the refugees and to engage in fanatic proselytism, using relief help as a means to that. Usually such actions are rightly forbidden by the

local authorities.

As regional coordinator, I try to bring together at least once a year those who do pastoral work with the refugees "in the field". Meetings are not so popular with these usually very down to earth people: I never managed to get them all together. But those who do attend recognize that it is a great help to listen to the experience of other pastoral workers in and outside the IMBISA region (International Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa): colleagues, priests, sisters and lay people. In those meetings we also reflect on the type of Church we want to help promote among the refugees, whether they are in camps or live in villages among the local population. It is not always easy to forget the "mission" and its structures, in order to support what is humbly growing out of the initiative of the refugee communities and their leaders. Much more difficult still is not to get drowned in relief programs where the refugees are totally on the receiving end. In various refugee camps in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa, small Christian communities are growing from within.

These communities try to draw upon their own resources, and the role of pastoral workers from outside is precisely to promote and to stimulate, not to put themselves in their place. In some camps we have the presence of fathers and sisters, but I am not looking for priests in all the other camps: often it is enough to concentrate on training and supporting the local church leaders and to help them overcome the major temptation of all refugees in camps: to sit back and to become totally dependent, until they lose their very souls.

### **Ecumenical collaboration**

Contrary to those practices, however, there are many examples of christian Churches working together in order to answer the



material and spiritual needs of the refugees in great respect for the religious denominations they encountered. Zimbabwe has certainly gone a long way in doing so, both in relief help and in ecumenical pastoral programs. As we move on, we discover more and more how many the spiritual and psychological needs are, and how small the means and the expertise at our disposal. Together we try to identify those needs and to look for help and assistance also from professionals. Right now we are starting programs in order to prepare the people for the time they will be able to return to their own countries.

### **Training programs for Church leaders**

One particular experience in Zimbabwe has given me great joy. It started a year and a half ago. I had noticed the rivalry among the various denominations in the camps. I had seen the ministers of these denominations passing each other by without more than a nod of the head, and even sometimes ignoring each other. Then, one day, a group among us decided to call a meeting and to talk to one another. The response was surprising. Surprising also how our analysis of the situation and of the pastoral needs of the people was similar. And so we decided to work together. As a group of some ten church denominations we went to three of the camps, and asked to meet the church leaders. We told them that we were their brothers and sisters in Christ. We told them that they were welcome in our country. We asked them to tell us about themselves, about their lives. We asked them also to tell us how we could help.

The answer was surprising. They did not ask for money, for church buildings, for "volunteers". They told us that they felt isolated and that they wanted more contacts with their Church communities outside the camps. And they shared with us how they felt helpless to minister to their people in a camp situation.

They asked us to help them with books, to come and give them some training, so that they could cope better. And now we have a team consisting of a reformed pastor, a Salvation Army captain with his wife, an Anglican minister and a Catholic Sister. Once a month the Church leaders come together for a Bible sharing, and for spiritual and pastoral training. The members of the training team agree among themselves about the content and the methods of the courses. I am particularly happy about the new approach of Bible study: no longer all the attention goes to the story or to the moral lessons involved, but slowly they learn to see how in the Bible stories it is their own life that is told, their own sufferings, their own encounter with God and they love it.

### **Repatriation in Namibia and South Africa**

The Churches have played an important role in the successful repatriation of the Namibians in exile. Their problems have not finished, and neither have the responsibilities of the Churches. In the post-independent period which has now begun, countless are the problems of unemployment, housing, education, land reform. Many are disillusioned and hard times lie ahead. The Namibian Government has explicitly requested the Churches' assistance, as well as their participation in looking for solutions.

In South Africa, too, the Churches are aware of their proper responsibility. They take an active part in preparing and organizing the return of the exiles and their re-integration in the country as well as in the immense task of working for peace and reconciliation; a peace and reconciliation, which has to be built on justice and equity, as we read in a new Kairos document, published by the Institute for Contextual Theology in August, 1990. This document tries to analyze the situation of violence presently prevailing in South Africa, looking for its

causes, in order to discern the appropriate remedies.

## **IMBISA**

IMBISA, through its Refugee Department, is actively involved in all such initiatives, through the many pastoral workers in and outside the IMBISA region, and under the responsibility of the appropriate structures in the local Churches. It works closely together with the Jesuit Refugee Service and with its Protestant sister organizations.

## **Repatriation for all? Not yet...**

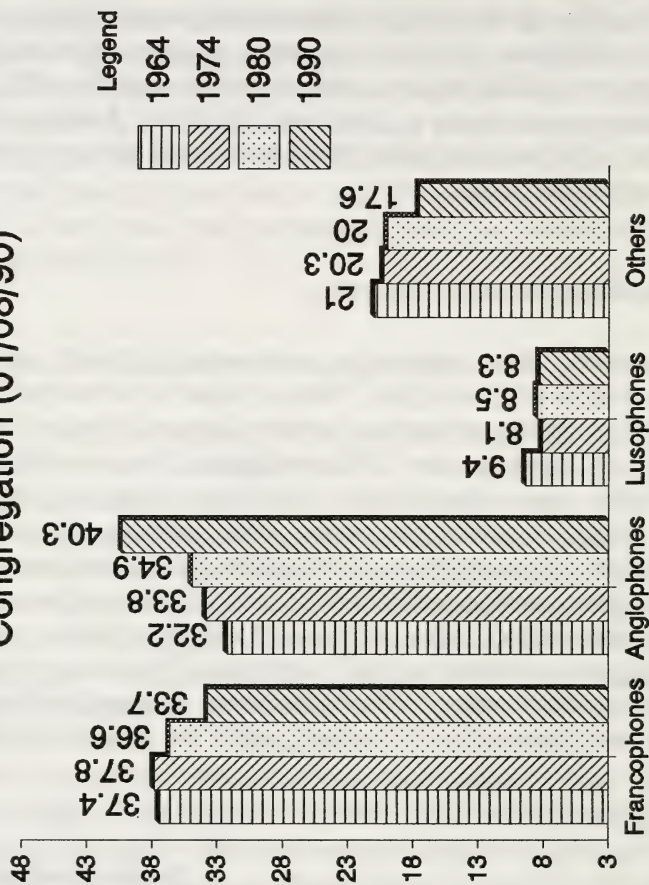
With peace talks eventually underway in South Africa, in Mozambique and in Angola, there is hope for better days in the near future. Many exiles have already begun to return to South Africa. In Angola and Mozambique the conditions for repatriation are not yet there: first there must be peace. the tragic fact is that with the peace talks underway the violence has increased everywhere, because the warring factions want to insure victory on the battlefield, so as to reinforce their position at the negotiating table. And so the war rages on, and the suffering of innocent people continues. The voice of reason remains a voice crying in the wilderness, covered by the noise of war and destruction. How long will it be allowed to go on?

**Frans Timmermans**  
**IMBISA Ref. Coordinator**  
**Harare, Zimbabwe**



# Statistics according to language

Congregation (01/08/90)



# **ALGERIA**

## **A MISSIONARY SPIRITUALITY**

### **IN AN ISLAMIC CONTEXT**

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For the Church in Algeria, independence marks a turning point. This is not the place to go over the pastoral or theological justifications that would underpin the re-founding of that church. These have been so often set out by distinguished spokesmen<sup>1</sup> of that Church itself. Nor is this the place to list what has been done or said by Muslim friends (whether they were people with political weight or not) who have expressed a desire that the Church's presence and Christian - Muslim dialogue should be maintained.

I want to consider only the impact which that turning point has been having upon the spirituality of individual christians and of christian and religious communities. Such a look back seems to me to be needed if we are to attain to a clearer understanding of the influence that the milieu exercises (where it is predominantly Muslim) on the spiritual life of the christian missionary.

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<sup>1</sup> See Teissier Mgr H., *Eglise en Islam: méditation sur l'existence chrétienne en Algérie*, Paris, Le Centurion, 1984.

Later in this article (cf below), I attempt a blueprint for a missionary spirituality<sup>2</sup> for someone who is in a Muslim milieu.

## I. Today's spirituality History's legacy

### The appeal of Nazareth

At the outset of that new era, doing as Charles de Foucauld did was like a "going down to Nazareth", a spirituality of "hidden life" in the company of Jesus, in absolute solidarity with those who were receiving us, a solidarity of living, of working, of serving; seeking for maximum assimilation in language and culture - in a word, it was **acculturation**. The key idea was that we put away all proselytizing, everything that might hint we were hankering for power..... What marked those days mainly was a feel that they were "joyful mysteries" of the Incarnation, in a "brotherhood with everybody" flowing from the times.

Alone or all together, the first part of the Acts of the Apostles supplied reading we rejoiced to go over. Small church groups, scattered here and there, communities of religious for example, were able to find themselves reflected in the mini-Pentecost groups of the Church's earliest stage; yeast specks in a batch... The only activity was a disinterested service, expressing

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<sup>2</sup> The expression "missionary" is used only with hesitation in a muslim country. The Moslem sees it as proselytism. For that reason Mgr Claverie stated from his very first homily given in Oran, October 9, 1981: "We are not, nor do we wish to be, part of those proselytizing evangelizers who think to give God glory by heedless zeal or total disregard for others, their culture, their belief... We are and we wish to be missionaries of God's love as we have seen it revealed in Jesus Christ. That love, infinitely respectful of mankind, does not impose itself, does not compel, does not force hearts nor consciences. Gently, its very presence lifts up the crushed, puts fresh life into the hopeless and the feeble...".



lovingness, Jesus' universal love for all.

Those tiny groups, it has to be said, were French, carrying in themselves the potential for creating institutional things. They are heirs to a past of same weight - schools, health - centers... It was not difficult, for those who wished, to get jobs in the public service. Everything needed doing then, to help a nation recovering from a war that lasted for seven years. Bishops, priests, religious and lay people adopted Algerian nationality and sealed their commitment.

### **The call to leave everything**

Twelve years pass like that before the stripping away is total at both personal and community levels: the "being hidden away with Jesus" at Nazareth. The Church is denuded of social works (schools, dispensaries...) in the nationalization of the 1975-1976 period. In the aftermath it had to be accepted that you could start no charitable work to serve the public, nor use your professional abilities, paid or unpaid, not even gratis. For most of us it is the first time we have known - and some are old enough when it comes along - the constraints of working for a living alongside Muslim colleagues and co-workers in a situation where you have absolutely no say in things.

We were immersed, with pain but with gratification too, in a world that was almost unknown to us. One might call it a spiritual experience of "secularization". It is something that helps you on in the "leaving all behind" and grasping what the Incarnation signifies. In such a human solidarity of work, dialogue sheds all its formal limits and slides unhindered into contacts more basic and perhaps more true. Once it had been the preaching of the Good News that had to be put away, then everything was staked upon institutional service. Now suddenly there is a sort of evangelisation by communication,

bearing shared workdays, doing a turn for someone, accepting help, sharing your own self at the very grass-roots level<sup>3</sup>.

### The call to communion

Then there came the paradoxical pleasure of watching all sorts of dividing walls crumble, between foreigners and Algerians, Muslim and Christian.

In the missionary's heart, a new sort of spiritual balance settled in, one which makes the dimension of "communion" supreme, without excluding any of the rest: communion with these women, these men, these young people one is meeting, on the same footing, day after day, at work, in the street, on the market place. It is an experience of close friendliness and kinship. One or other priest or religious is even taken to live under the same roof and enters fully into a family group. Fellow-workers are made welcome into priests' and communities' homes. People receive guests or go to visit, trusting each other fully. Such comings and goings create ample opportunity to talk about religion. And yet successful attempts to pray together are rare, even though you ask or are asked for prayers. "You'll remember to say a prayer for me today ...", "Think of me at Mass..."

Of course, deep in the religious community or the small church groups, all this little universe of relationships is quite naturally present and put into the prayers, particularly the Eucharist. Personal prayer is peopled with the faces you meet every day. What the gospels tell of Jesus, pursued by the crowds anxious

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<sup>3</sup> Our thinking derives much help from books written since Vatican II, e.g. Legrand Lucien, *Le Dieu qui vient. La Mission dans la Bible*, Paris, Desclée, 1988 or Mgr Teissier again, *La mission de l'Eglise*, Paris, Desclée, 1985.

to meet him, when he wants to be alone with the Father, becomes deeply one's own. Perhaps here we have the core experience that gives the missionary who lives in a Muslim nation the paradoxical joy of crossing barriers, even the religious ones that you would consider *a priori* impossible to get over, and of doing it in the moment when the means to manage it seem to be further and further beyond his control.

### **The call to the Paschal Mystery**

This was however but one of many stages in the spiritual journey, one that you could say you "crashed into", as those developments unrolled that have marked the Church in Algeria over the three last decades. The economic crisis speeded up the process of removing the jobs of foreigners in the civil service and for many priests and religious there came another "stripping away", most noticeably a continued shrinking in the numbers in the already very reduced Christian communities. Once more we had to find an answer to these different calls, quite humble ones, almost always unpaid.

For many it meant experiencing maybe not uselessness but at least not being able to earn anything whatsoever, while at the same time drawing closer and closer to the world of the lowly and the powerless. Individuals and communities lived intimately with insecurity, the harshness of want, a poor life caused by a pressing economic crisis, above all for young people and the jobless - something many Algerians have to endure. At the same time a wave whose surge you are too near to be able to notice, is piling up: Islamic fundamentalism<sup>4</sup>, with its moral, societal, family, political and religious consequences, now grown familiar to the wide world.

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<sup>4</sup> See *L'Islamisme au Maghreb, La voie du Sud*, by BURGAT François, Paris, Karthala, 1988 which is well documented.



Tomorrow, then, will there be a corner left for non-Muslim minorities, or even for foreigners? There lies a question we are still hesitant to ask ourselves, but the repercussions upon the spiritual, both for the individual and the community, are clear.

From a spirituality made up for the most part of "joyful communion" there gradually evolved a spirituality that, while still radiant because full of hope, was more anguished, more difficult to live with. Some people were even calling it the spirituality "of the pascal mystery". We kept faith with this people, convinced that the seeds put down in sincere communion were still full of life. There were some unexpected shoots springing from this soil, seemingly so sterile for planting the Gospel. When all proselytizing had been banned, individuals and groups, in mysterious ways and through links that seem to have no Church connection, reach a decision to put their faith in Jesus Christ. Sometimes it is only at the end of a long solitary journey in faith that individuals feel the need to join a Church community.

### **The Holy Spirit is calling**

It is true of course that some human call will have evoked these neophytes' answer: some "proselytism"<sup>5</sup> - a book - a radio programme. It is rarely, in our experience, because of the witness of a local Christian group. It was reason to persevere in living the humble lot of the seed hidden in the ground, the yeast buried in the batch of dough.

This experience carried us back again and again to Peter's spiritual awakening when he went to visit Cornelius the Centurion (Acts 10). The Holy Spirit is at work in those also who do not have our faith. This is maybe the most powerful

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<sup>5</sup> See Rm 10:14-15.

lesson we learned both as individuals and together. What other explanation can there be for this dynamic of conversion and transformation? Usually these are ordinary folk, people who are deeply attached to keeping their Koranic tradition.

Coming across these clear signs of the Holy Spirit's presence is not the least of our gratifications. St. Paul lists them in Galatians (5:22): "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control". Away beyond the borders the Church sets up, the Kingdom is mysteriously being built up.

### **The call to be free**

Is there any need to say how this experience powerfully supports a spirituality of freedom in religion, of respect and recognition for all persons in this intimate aspect of life, their religious living? Or how it instils a distrust of anything smacking of imperialism or totalitarianism in religion, either in yourself or in anyone else? To read over the history of Islam and Christianity, to think of the still smarting wounds left by political and religious struggles or by oppression: this compels us to humility.

What we scarcely dare give the name of evangelical to in former attitudes, now demands apology from us. Even within the Church herself we are asked never again to answer violence with violence. Never again fall into the hellish alliance of the spiritual with the temporal power. We must be mentally alert, because of the crumbling materialistic system, socialist or liberal; the upsurge of once down-trodden cultures; the economic crisis; mass population shifts; realignments in religions, either directly or indirectly supported by Islamic or Christian power structures, all increase - maybe to a greater degree in us than in others - the risk of falling back into

ostracization, excommunication, anathema, *jihad*<sup>6</sup> or crusade.

### **No crusade, no *jihad*: love**

This attitude, it goes without saying, is no unwillingness sprung from human respect, cowardice or fear of hurting others, to "have your answer ready for people who ask you the reasons for the hope that you have" (I Pet 3:15). What is being asked is rather that you bear once more the costs of the Gospel challenging you to get closer to the truth of being authentic in your christian living, that way of living I believe no follower of Jesus ought ever stray from - dispositions of gentleness, respect, refusal to allow religion, less still God's name, be used for power games or expansionist ends, however noble they might look to be.

The most courageous texts of Vatican II on religious liberty<sup>7</sup> and the Church's attitude towards non-christian religions<sup>8</sup>, nourish the spirituality of the christian living in a country with a Muslim majority. The Holy Father's meetings with Muslims, particularly the Casablanca one<sup>9</sup>; his praying for peace at Assisi in 1986 alongside representatives of great world

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<sup>6</sup> The precise meaning of this word has got to be understood. We in the West take it usually to mean "Holy War". What is really meant is anything done in the effort to spread the rights of God and those of man as the Koran enuntiates them. See Gardet L., *L'Islam, Religion et Communauté*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer (Collection Foi Vivante), 1970, pp. 132 et seq..

<sup>7</sup> Vatican II, Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*).

<sup>9</sup> See *OSSERVATORE ROMANO* No 36, 3 Sept. 1985, Address to Muslim youth at the stadium in Casablanca.



religions; every step that has been made officially or otherwise towards dialogue, all are an encouragement to keep travelling this road, to try to capture once again the spirit of the "poverello" of Assisi. He faced down churchmen and civil lords who were both eager for a showdown with the Saracens. He called for love, for Gospel gentleness. He risked his life for a dialogue in the case of the seige at Damietta. Some of his biographers<sup>10</sup> interpret his "passion" at Alverno as the ultimate mystical agony of his quest to have the Church change direction, to have it show the world of Islam the disarming evidence of that love that is revealed in Jesus Christ.

### Love finds ways

Some lessons can already be drawn from this on-going face-to-face with an Arab-Islamic world. The christian and the christian community are not done with change, and yet it is already clear that rather than change tactics of mission activity, what is needed is spiritual conversion. This road has long since been mapped and followed by Francis of Assisi, Charles de Foucauld and many others who have experienced what it means to face up to Islam. For some religious men and women living in this milieu, the resources they need are found within their own Institute's treasury of spirituality. Much could be said of the perhaps unsuspected resources in the spiritual teaching of someone like Libermann who was really not much faced with Islam, although his letter, addressed to the ruler of Dakar, is a model of Christian - Muslim exchange, filled with gospel charity and good manners. For a Spiritan who lives in these surrounds, can there be any other way than to make his own the spiritual teaching of "apostolic living"? Libermann describes it thus:

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<sup>10</sup> See notably *L'Islam et Saint François d'Assise, la mission prophétique pour le dialogue*, by Bossetti-Sani, Giulio, Paris, Publisud, 1987.

"that life of love and holiness lived on earth by the Son of God in order to save and sanctify people. By it He continually sacrificed Himself, thereby glorifying the Father and saving the world" (cf. S.R.L., 3).

I do not claim to have reached a universally valid definition of what the spirituality of a missionary who is living in a Muslim milieu should be. Yet it ought be possible to outline a provisional synthesis, from the experience I have been describing.

## **II. A tentative blueprint of a spirituality for the missionary in a Moslem milieu**

### **Trinitarian**

First some generalisations, which would need to be refined a lot... To live in a Muslim environment means being almost obsessed by christological and trinitarian problems, just as the early christians were, as is clear in the decisions of the early Church Councils. But it means, too, taking on the same societal, personal, political and religious struggles that wrap these questions around.

The Arab-Muslim milieu acts on the missionary like a reagent would - it harps incessantly on the oneness of God, and the missionary develops a hypersensitivity in his spiritual being, regarding whatever touches the Trinity.

Some days we feel bursting to scream that God is not "in solitary", not "all alone" in His magnificent grandeur. We want urgently to bear witness to this. God is no way like an

autocrat. He does not condescend, issuing eternal dictates to mankind. No, He speaks to us in Jesus Christ in a lifegiving way. He is Father to us. He gives His own Spirit to us so we can move into relationship as children with Him. We are not "submitted" to Him. His Spirit is love, inviting us to have respect for every person just as the person is, his beliefs, his personality, his culture.

His Spirit is of dialogue, esteemed as lifegiving. His Spirit does not look upon anyone as "to be brought back"<sup>11</sup> to the right road" or into the believer's *umma*. All are brothers and sisters, to be loved just as they are. To be a witness to Jesus Christ means putting "dialogue" everywhere; it means bestowing all you have, all you are and it means communion just as in the Blessed Trinity.

### **The Easter Mystery**

In this spirituality, you have to live out the paradoxes of the Beatitudes and above all the mystery of Easter, however odd - even scandalous - that seems to be when you are living in a milieu where God seemingly should crown spiritual or even temporal campaigning (*jihad*) with success.

The Eucharist assumes - as I have already mentioned and as will be readily understood - a very special place for the christian immersed in a Muslim milieu, not just as a resource giving life and refreshment or as a merely spiritual support, which personal prayer and common prayer too can supply, but in its essential role as the sacrament of that Easter mystery the christian is living day in, day out with Christ who still lovingly gives Himself to the Father and to all his brothers.

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<sup>11</sup> The expression "the right road" is found in the very first part of the Koran (Sura 1.6).



What fruits may come from the rediscovery by the lay Christian - man, woman, married or single - of the missionary implication of being a christian, God alone can tell. What is absolutely certain is that in these mini-communities, churches on a human scale - many a person has found for himself the savour of the Good News. Many consider the rediscovery of what "following Christ" really means, as the greatest grace of their lives and this they received in what would seem to be a situation far from likely to favour such a deepening of spiritual life<sup>12</sup>.

Those who are religious or priests, despite, perhaps even because of, the innuendos regarding the sincerity of what they profess to live, find they are pushed into making of their life-dedication, an act of adoration of the one God while at the same time it bears witness to the new relationships set up in Jesus Christ that empowers us to say "Father"<sup>13</sup> to that very God, because He has put His Spirit into us, and all this to the deep scandal of their many Muslim friends.

And from this reality flow dialogue, service, just "being there", "universal brotherliness", drawn from being in union with Jesus and His Easter mystery and more than sufficient to give fulfilment to the christian and all the more to the missionary. Charles de Foucauld used to write "Jesus Charity". This was at once an emanation and a summation of this spirituality, a spirituality so centered on Christ, adapted for a hermit hidden in a population confessing a God that is One and Great.

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<sup>12</sup> *Chrétien en Algérie. Témoignages et réflexions 1976 - 1979* (Polycopied), Centre d'Etudes Diocésain, Chemin des Glycines 5, Algiers, pp. 29 et seq..

<sup>13</sup> See Ga 4:6.

## A spirituality of Pentecost

Many more hermits have followed him into the same aloneness, hiddenness, a totally free gift of oneself to the People of Believers, silent adoration rendered to Jesus in the Eucharist. Still it is abundantly clear that this is not a usual way. To live immersed in this environment calls for the support of a community of fellow Christians, to keep your psychological balance, to ensure you have the means to live, to "hold out" spiritually. Sometimes at the most practical level, in order to get a residence permit there has to be a link with a Christian community where you serve. There are situations where this is the only way.

The conclusion emerges that it is inside the community itself - church or small groups, as it may happen, or male or female religious community - that there comes the experience, the evidence of relatedness to the One God in three Persons. It is within the community itself, enfolded by the one Spirit, that one learns and practices respect for diversity. There it is that self-giving is prized and that differences inside union are appreciated as valuable. In community there comes a permanent Pentecost, welcoming ecumenically with no distinctions of race, nation, christian sect<sup>14</sup>. In Algeria, where a spirit of all-out cooperation reigns, there is an extraordinary field for inter-denominational ecumenism in these mini-groups of christians who share prayer, scripture reading and very often Eucharist.

The Muslim *umma* derives its ambition to bring together into a shared belief all people of every race, from the "vertical" character of its relation with the Unique God. It must however be said that it tends - whatever our Muslim friends may like to say in disagreement - to locate that movement towards

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<sup>14</sup> See Acts 2.

oneness in a policy of uniformity. This has its origin in the Book that would rule peoples' individual and their collective lives. This is the real crux of today's dilemma in the Muslim world. It has to face up to many, many things: a wave of democratization that touches all countries; today's world of egalitarianism and secularism; women's rights; the claims for preservation of cultural identities; shifts of populations; atheism; the existence of the establishments attached to other great religions.

It no longer satisfies the Muslim world to put its faith in its ability to gather the whole world into its fold (whatever the illusions created by the radical right wing movements that are running through it) and while awaiting the day when all is to be one under Islam, just tolerate people who are "other" under a generous "protectiveness".

This is the agonizing problem that lies beneath the surface of unpredictable political-religious movements in North Africa and even more acutely in Algeria, as indeed in other regions which are predominantly Islamised. All of this has its spiritual repercussions on the Christians who live there, as we have been seeing, and if they do not have community back-up they are helpless to face up to the pressure.

From the day this nation got its freedom down to today we have come through many upsets, yet the arrival of Vatican II was nicely timed to shed light for us upon the true nature of the Church and its mission. We often get the feeling that we were not far in front of our Muslim friends in meeting the crisis of spirituality. Such realization calls to thanksgiving for the grace of the Council's *aggiornamento* and also to humility as Christians, as believing communities and even more as Christian missionaries.



## A spirituality of reconciliation

We have to admit having been through purifying experiences along the way. I feel sure we have not finished learning our own sinfulness as individuals and as a group, nor are we done bringing it for mercy before God and our fellowmen, Christian, Muslim and Atheist. We had to seek pardon for the wrongs done by a Christian community that was, whether willingly or not, close-tied to colonialism and characterised by a certain missionary spirituality, by "verticality", by its self-assurance about its beliefs and culture, even to the point of denying the value of any other faith or culture, and even if such attitudes ran in tandem with great self-giving and Gospel gentleness.

We had to carry the burden of the suspicion, particularly on the part of children and adolescents, that we had the secret intention of making converts, when we sought to throw open our institutions to all and lead a "hidden life", while we were trying already to carry the burden of being both "christian" and "French". Lay people, religious and priests who took out Algerian citizenship found the suspicions were not wiped out by that.

We had, too, to get along with other Frenchmen and women who had not got our beliefs; with lay people who came to give us their services and others we may call carpet-baggers taking advantage of a newly independent nation.

We had to face up to the division between Christian denominations, to the derision of Muslim friends who used it to serve their own ends. That meant we had to live with pardon, acceptance and mutual respect between our various creeds and, let us dare say it, a deep unitedness beyond our differences, that found expression in sharing the Scriptures and the Eucharist.

It is not rare in Algeria to find a priest presiding a eucharistic assembly of one or two couples, some single persons, a few Catholic sisters hemmed in by a impressive gathering of Egyptian orthodox Copts, evangelical Christians, a Lutheran or two, a Methodist, an Anglican, an Ethiopian Christian, a Hussite and some other sorts which Eastern Europe and the Near East so abundantly supply. So far as it can be managed, each one is given a moment to express himself in his mother-tongue in prayer or hymn. It very often happens that the Lord's prayer - the Christian prayer - is said in a happy cacophony of twelve or fifteen languages. The total got to fifty for an assembly of the diocese at Oran one Pentecost!

Imagine the secret forgiveness this speaks of, the prejudices and reticence overcome, the breaking down of the walls of our "tribal" certainties: all leading us to an ever greater humbleness and, as I have said already, a different relationship to the God of love, the Blessed Trinity, the Easter mystery.

This can at times be a bumpy road we are travelling together, when you are doing it as a religious community, which is becoming steadily more and more "international" in persons and in its witness. There are sufferings strewn all along this road, because it is not an easy thing for people, even those struggling to live by the all-embracing love of Christ, to share one table, one prayer, one job.

And another thing, too: if the living quarters are sometimes too cramped ... Yet, at the same time, what a liberating broadening of view, what cultural enrichment, how many sincere friendships we have made here with Christians who have since moved on elsewhere across the wide world!

## **A spirituality of freedom**

To experience such living sensitizes you to every type - human, sacred, Christian, Muslim - of totalitarianism. It binds you almost against your will and in virtue of the Gospel you announce, to support the rights of the individual, so everyone can freely follow his conscience; to respect God's mysterious ways as they exist in our fellows. It means following Jesus in our own way in Church and in religion, bearing witness to free human response to God who gives us His Spirit enabling us to confess He is Father and all mankind brother and sister.

## **A spirituality open to fresh demands**

The greatest single spiritual joy is perhaps the discovery at the end of a long sharing of our lives with Muslims, unbelievers and Christians come from all ends of this country, a sharing of solidarity, of partnership and mutual welcome, that the walls partitioning our religious inheritance are not as impenetrable as we thought and that the quest for God and the brotherhood of man may still lead us, in days to come, perhaps days not so far off, with no need to deny who we are or where we come from, to still more and different spiritual adventures in the meeting place our united hearts create.

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# MISSION "AD GENTES"

## AND

### TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

The treatment of mission *Ad Gentes* in the recent Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, suggests that we Spiritans might usefully reflect on the use we have made and are still making of the expression "First Evangelization." While this is a useful occasion for reflection on the matter, the origins of this paper lie elsewhere: they are twofold.

Firstly, recent reflection at the Generalate on Mission in Asia, led me to see that Spiritans tend to make a clear division between evangelization of peoples who belong to African or other "Traditional Religions" and members of the great world religions of Asia, whereas theologically they are all in the same position of being non-Christians. This article, then, is concerned with the peoples who are object of mission, and the terms which we use in referring to them, and not with methods of evangelizing one or the other of these peoples.

The second origin of this paper is the shock received at a recent international meeting of Spiritans to find more than two-thirds of the participants still using the expression "Animist" to designate members of the traditional religions of Africa. Although apparently quite different, this point is linked to the first one. It is largely false anthropological notions of African religion -- those which led to use of the unacceptable expression "animist" -- which make us look on followers of

traditional religions as "pagans," or without any true knowledge of God, while we looked on Buddhists or Hindus as having some true knowledge of God and therefore in a better situation as regards salvation.

It is because, for the reputation of Spiritans, it seems urgent to end that abusive use of an obsolete, erroneous and hurtful expression, that the section on "animism" is long. Also, each text quoted has been left in its original language, which adds to the overall length of the piece.

Amongst us, then, the expression "First Evangelization" has gradually acquired a meaning which limits its use to an unacceptable extent. It is suggested here that the only feasible remedy is to give up using the expression.

In practice the term "first evangelization" has been used by Spiritans, for mission to peoples of traditional religion. Many Spiritans still employ the term "animist" when speaking of these peoples. The expression "traditional religion" has not been generally adopted by us, though it is the acceptable expression today in the light of current studies in religion and has been in use for decades. Use of the obsolete term "animist" -- which together with the even more obsolete ones of "totemist" and "fetishist" have long been relegated to oblivion by anthropologists and students of religion -- may be at the root of the undue limitation imposed on the expression "first evangelization."

The General Chapter of 1968/69 employs the expression "first evangelization" (380 and 381) and, in the "index" uses the expression for the preaching of the Gospel to "peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ" (3) and similar situations. It is not an expression which was used in the Latin Rule or in the *Constitutions* of 1934. The General Chapter of 1974 does not employ the expression, nor does the *Spiritan*



*Rule of Life* of 1986. The Chapter of 1980, which does use it, seems to distinguish between first evangelization and "new forms of Christian witness among Muslim peoples" (42).

## "Animism"

"Animist" (with the related "animism") is an anthropological term, dating from the last century and the British anthropologist Edward Tylor. The expression forms part of an attempted evolutionary explanation of the origins of religion, a theory which has long been discarded by anthropologists.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the erroneous label has remained stuck to many peoples whom later and more accurate knowledge showed believe in a Supreme Being<sup>2</sup>. The error is the more serious in that it is bound up with theories as to the origin of religion. To continue to use the discredited term may give the impression that one still holds the now unacceptable philosophical and theological theory.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. E.E.Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion*. Oxford:Univ. Press, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> The reason for the superficial initial judgment about "animism" may be seen in this extract from Kakule Waswandi, where he shows that the role of the multitude of intermediaries is subordinate to the One God who alone has the name "Nyamuhanga" among the Nandi of Zaire: "Nyamuhanga: la conception de Dieu chez les nande du Zaire," in *Cahiers des Religions Africaines*. vol 19, N°38, July 1985, 249-268:

Cependant le caractère monothéiste des religions traditionnelles est fondamental pour comprendre la conception africaine du monde qui est régi par toute une multitude d'intermédiaires, les Esprits et les Ancêtres, dont l'importance dans le quotidien risque de masquer la réalité du Dieu Unique. Ces intermédiaires sont toujours au service du Dieu Unique; ils aident à préciser concrètement la volonté transcendante de Dieu. (p. 268).

Alas, the term "animist" is still used by many missionaries, including Spiritans. Probably those Spiritans who continue to use the expression have little or no knowledge of anthropology and thus do not even realise that they are using an obsolete scientific term which has unfortunate connotations, as though it were a valid description of the religion of many peoples today.<sup>3</sup>

African theologians and anthropologists, who might be expected to know the religion of their own peoples better than colonial intellectuals, have long rejected the term "animist" as a description of the religion traditional among their peoples.

A vital meeting was held in Abidjan, just thirty years ago this Spring, under the auspices of the Société africaine de Culture. At that *Colloque sur les Religions*, important figures from the Western World of studies were present: RR.PP. Cosmao, Daniélou, Henry; Melville Herskovits, Raymond Leenhardt, R. Sastre, P. Tempels, and from Africa, Alioune Diop, John Mbiti, Onuora Nzekwu, John Amissah, Peter Sarpong and others. At its close one of the resolutions adopted, rejecting the word "animism" and asking that it be replaced by "African religion", reads:

Pour demeurer respectueux des convictions de tous, et pour ne pas susciter de discussions entre les anthropologues et les ethnologues eux-mêmes, la Société africaine de Culture préférerait désormais que le mot "animisme" soit remplacé par "religions africaines"... Des ethnologues et des penseurs éminents

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford University has had a chair of Anthropology since 1896, when E.B.Tylor became first Professor. The Collège de France has had a chair of Social Anthropology since 1958, with Claude Lévi-Strauss as first Professor. Lévi-Strauss' inaugural lecture is one of the classic texts of Structuralism, (published in his *Anthropologie Structurale Deux*. Paris:Plon, 1973, pp. 11-44).

ont refusé le nom péjoratif et imprécis d'"animisme" aux conceptions que les Africains se faisaient de leurs rapports avec les morts et le cosmos et avec les institutions afférentes.<sup>4</sup>

In an appeal, in 1988, finally to leave aside the word "animist" and replace it by "traditional African religion" or simply "African religion", the Editor of the Zairean magazine, *Telema* (Londi Boka de Mpasi s.j.), writes:

Nécessaire Mise au Point sur L'Animisme.

Depuis plus de trois décennies, d'éminents africanistes et sociologues de notoriété mondiale ont à maintes reprises proscrit le mot "animisme". Pourtant nombre d'intellectuels osent encore l'employer publiquement et impunément pour désigner la religion traditionnelle africaine. Puisse notre mise au point éclairer leurs lanternes une fois pour toutes! <sup>5</sup>

Speaking of the *Colloque sur les religions*, held in Abidjan in 1961, *Telema* goes on to say that:

Les compétences de notoriété mondiale en divers domaines (anthropologique, théologique, sociologique, historique, etc..), ont proscrit à l'unanimité le terme "animisme" comme impropre et insidieusement *péjoratif*. L'expression *religion africaine traditionnelle* ou *religion africaine*, tout court, a été définitivement adoptée...

Il importe de noter que ce sont surtout des auteurs francophones qui aujourd'hui continuent à s'acharner à employer (innocemment?) le mot "*animisme*" pour

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<sup>4</sup> *Colloque sur les Religions*. Paris:Présence Africaine, 1962, p.232.

<sup>5</sup> *Telema*. 55, 3/4 1988, pp.15-16.



qualifier les religions africaines...<sup>6</sup>

As Meinrad Hebga points out, official Church publications used divide populations into Christian, Moslem and Animist. Condemning the notion of "animism", as the essence of African religion, Hebga says:

Pour qu'une telle identification soit légitime, deux conditions devraient se réaliser: que l'animisme soit une religion, et que cette religion caractérise les peuples africains. Or ces conditions ne se réalisent pas. Donc il faut abandonner un usage abusif de termes confus qui ne servent point du tout à clarifier l'étude de notre patrimoine religieux.<sup>7</sup>

Vincent Mulago points out the weakness of the animist theory in the case of the Bantu peoples:

Il y a donc bien là une croyance à une vertu intime qui se dégage de certains objets sur celui qui les porte. Mais cette force émane-t-elle d'une âme, de l'âme de l'objet? S'ils le croyaient, ils seraient animistes, mais ils ne le croient pas... Si vous leur demandez d'où vient cette force, cette activité, ils vous répondront que c'est Dieu (*Nyamuzinda*) lui-même qui l'y a mise.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* Indeed, experience has shown that use of the expression "animist" among Spiritans today is not limited to confrères of one language group.

<sup>7</sup> Meinrad P. Hebga, *Emancipation d'Eglises sous Tutelle*. Paris:Présence Africaine, 1976, p.123.

<sup>8</sup> Vincent Mulago, *Un Visage Africain du Christianisme*. Paris:Présence Africaine, 1962, p.86; cf. J.MASSON, *Père de nos Pères*. Roma:PUG, 1988;

John Mbiti reminds us that:

Tylor's ideas were popularized by his disciples. Since then (1866), the term *animism* has come to be widely used in describing traditional religions of Africa and other parts of the world... This type of argument and interpretation places African religions at the bottom of the supposed line of religious evolution. It tells us that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are at the top, since they are monotheistic... African peoples are aware of all these elements of religion: God, spirits and divinities are part of the traditional body of beliefs. Christianity and Islam acknowledge the same type of spiritual beings. The theory of religious evolution, in whichever direction, does not satisfactorily explain or interpret African religions. Animism is not an adequate description of these religions and it is better for that term to be abandoned once and for all.<sup>9</sup>

The appeal of these learned Africans, made already some twenty or more years ago, that the expression "animist" should be deleted from our religious/anthropological vocabulary, merits the most serious attention of all those who claim interest in Africans, in African culture and in African religion. In fact, for so many Spiritans to have continued for so long to use an obsolete term from the science of anthropology, and one which is considered pejorative by the Africans themselves, raises questions as to the role we allot to the social sciences in our missionary formation and raises questions about the quality of

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"Croyance et recours au Suprême dans la tradition d'Afrique noire," NRT 113 (1991) 219-238.

<sup>9</sup> John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1969, pp. 7-8.

our Spiritan missionary formation as a whole, initial and ongoing.

Sadly, some semi-official publications still give "animists" as a category of religion in the statistics for African dioceses.<sup>10</sup> Those who work in Africa and are in touch with African studies and with African sensibilities, should take up this matter with the relevant publications.

## "Pagan"

The reason for this long excursus on the use of the term "animist" is that this label has been substituted for the earlier term "pagan" or "infidel", found in our 1934 *Constitutions*<sup>11</sup> and in many official publications<sup>12</sup> of some decades ago.

Dictionary definitions of "pagan", show it to be a vague term including the following meanings: "Relating to religions other than Christianity, Judaism and Islam" (others say, 'other than the great world religions'); "related to pagan antiquity; having no religion".

The substitution, in either direction, of "animist", for "pagan", has

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<sup>10</sup> e.g., *L'Eglise Catholique en Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale*. 1991, pp.307 ff; pp. 633 ff.; pp.890 ff.(and in many other places). Also still employing "animiste" as a category is a publication of Les Editions du Cerf, *L'Etat des Religions*. Paris, 1987, and the Italian, *Calendario Atlante De Agostini*.

<sup>11</sup> *Regula* 3 and *Constitutions* 7.

<sup>12</sup> The change in designation from "pagan" to "animist", in Père Perraud's otherwise admirable work, came about after 1966, or when anthropologists had already abandoned the latter term as being an erroneous description of traditional religions.



had the negative consequence of giving the impression that the peoples called "animist," who would now preferably be called followers of "traditional religion", were without any knowledge of a Supreme Being, Creator or Author of Life. "Le mot paganisme, devenu synonyme d'animisme par simple déclaration, ne contribue point à clarifier les choses," says Hebga.<sup>13</sup>

The question of the use of the word "animist" is, therefore, much more than a quibble over words and the African theologians are quite clear about this. In this they are in harmony with the current situation of anthropological studies on "traditional religions", except that more recent African scholars like to get away from the imported categories of Western anthropology and prefer to treat the traditional religions on their own terms.<sup>14</sup>

## Mission Ad Gentes

The encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, does not speak of "first evangelization", nor did *Ad Gentes*, whose quarter century it was written to celebrate. They both use the expression "Mission ad Gentes". This mission *ad gentes* embraces:

peoples, groups and sociocultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups. (RM 33)

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* p. 125.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. for example, C.K. Anyanwu, "African Religious Experience," in E.A. Ruch and K.C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy*. Rome: Officium Libri Catholici, 1984, pp. 161-176.

The Encyclical goes on to say that this is only the first of three situations facing the Church's evangelizing task. The second situation is that of Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures; here it is pastoral care which is required. In the third type of situation it is re-evangelization which is called for. The letter goes on to say:

Missionary activity proper, namely the mission *ad gentes*, is directed to "peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ", "who are far from Christ", in whom the Church "has not yet taken root" (all phrases from Vat II AG), and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel. It is distinct from other ecclesial activities inasmuch as it is addressed to groups and settings which are non-Christian because the preaching of the Gospel and the presence of the Church are either absent or insufficient. It can thus be characterized as the work of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel, building up the local Church and promoting the values of the Kingdom. The specific nature of this mission *ad gentes* consists in its being addressed to "nonChristians". (RM 34)

This description of mission *ad gentes* makes it clear that all mission to nonChristians comes under this heading. It may be said that "promoting the values of the Kingdom", takes in the various forms of witness and dialogue, as the details in the enumeration of the "Paths of Mission" suggest. Among these "paths" witness has first place. It is in many cases...the only possible way of being a missionary, as we ourselves have said in SRL 15.3.

"Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission." (RM 44), and all other forms of mission are ultimately directed to this. In this paragraph of the Encyclical the expression "initial

proclamation" (*primus nuntius*) is said to have a central role. In N°37a, the expression "first evangelization" (*prior evangelizatio*) is used, but does not seem to have any special technical sense. This judgement is borne out by the fact that in N°30 the expression used for the same "first missionary situation" is "the initial mission *ad gentes*," (*prima missio ad gentes*). It is almost as though the Encyclical was deliberately varying its expressions in order to avoid consecrating any one expression of this type by using the same formula several times.

The Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* does not make any distinction between mission to those peoples of traditional religion and those who belong to one or other of the great non-Christian world religions. The inferior position of those peoples of traditional religions, whether in Africa, Asia, the Americas, or Oceania, in respect of salvation, is thus ended. In the Encyclical the expression "mission *ad gentes*," embraces and describes in the same way, mission to all nonChristian peoples, and includes all under this one descriptive heading.

## Conclusion

Continuing use of the misleading expression "animist" by Spiritans has contributed towards the impression that *First Evangelization* was somehow the missionary task of "converting pagans". "Pagans" were thought of as people who did not have any true knowledge of God. The situation of these peoples was considered, if we had occasion to consider the question at all, as inferior to that of adherents of the great world religions. More accurate knowledge as to the nature of traditional religion has shown that earlier judgments were superficial and basically false. There is now no reason for making that type of distinction



between the evangelizing of peoples of traditional religion and peoples of the great world religions. Consequently there is no longer much point in continuing to speak of "first evangelization". It would be better to adopt the conciliar expression of "mission ad gentes."

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# THE TERMINOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EVANGELIZATION

## Introduction

The term, "first evangelization", may receive a wider or a more restricted signification; there are some who wish to replace it with other terms considered more suitable. Terminology is important: various terms may denote the same reality, but each term focuses on a particular aspect and has a particular connotation or colour.

We do not think in words, we think in concepts linked with each other within a particular field of meaning. The same word may take on different meanings depending on its collocation. Hence terms must be related to the thought-pattern underlying them if their real meaning is to be discovered. I intend to do this with the term, evangelization, which according to SRL, 4 is our purpose.

Before I come to this, may I point out the lively debate already on, in the material being submitted by confreres for the Meeting on First Evangelization, concerning the extent and methods of "first evangelization". One confrere insists that "men commissioned for first evangelization should not at the same time be tied down to ministering to established parishes". Another submits that it should not be dragged on unduly:

"where there exists a Christian community, which can promote such commitment, and at the same time express their understanding of the faith in terms of their own culture, surely "first evangelization" is completed".

Another confrere (Adrian Edwards) offers in seven propositions what he considers a more exact definition of "first evangelization".

1. Beginning evangelization in a community where the Gospel has never in any way been preached.
2. Evangelization in an area where the Gospel has been preached, but in which it has not been "heard" by the people.
3. A situation where there are a certain number of "hearers of the Word" but no eucharistic Christians.
4. A situation where there are eucharistic Christians but no priests.
5. A situation where most practicing Christians are first generation Christians.
6. A situation where there are local priests but there is still a need for priests from outside.
7. A situation where though there are sufficient local priests, the level of "inculturation" remains inadequate.

Adrian excludes nos. 6 and 7 as being too open; I think that he would exclude no. 4 also. It is to be noted that he applies sociological delimitations, conversion being seen more from the point of view of a group than of individuals as such. Hence, although no. 2 looks very much like the "new evangelization" (see later), it really is not. We shall return later to the question of how to understand "first evangelization". We shall now examine the concept of evangelization and its meaning within different mind-sets and thought-patterns. To do this, we shall examine the linguistic usage of three documents: Vatican II's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*), *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI (1975), *Redemptoris Missio* of John Paul II (1990). I shall conclude with a brief look at the Spiritan Rule of Life.

Since a variety of words and phrases express the concept of evangelization, we shall necessarily be selective. Constructions



with the word, evangelization, as verb or noun become increasingly common after Vatican II. A variety of verbs are used with *evangelium* (gospel), for example, *praedicare* (preach), *diffundere* (diffuse), *afferre* (hand on). We shall focus especially on combinations with *nuntiare* (announce) since its increasingly frequent use is a new feature which throws light on the altered thought-pattern.

## 1. Biblical Background

In Greek usage, *euaggelion* is the technical term for news of victory in battle.<sup>1</sup> The verb from it, *euaggelizesthai* (to evangelise), means literally to bring joyful news/glad tidings, often of victory. The scene in 2 Sam. 18: 19 - 32 illustrates this perfectly. David in flight was anxiously awaiting news from the battle field. A herald runs up and shouts: "Good news for my lord the king!" In the Gospels, especially Luke uses the verb, *euaggelizesthai*, to denote the preaching of Jesus; the object is always the Reign of God (4: 43; 8: 1), the subjects are the "poor" (4: 18). God's Reign is thus presented as an object of hope and joy for the poor - the long-awaited Kingdom has come! This verb, to evangelise (*euaggelizesthai*), is thus a missionary term<sup>2</sup> even if in the rest of the New Testament it is used also for the Good News concerning Christ who has now become in turn the object of preaching, and who is preached to Christians as well. The herald of the Gospel is the bearer of glad tidings of victory and freedom from all evil which oppresses the people.

The Old English word, gospel, meant *good spel* (= good news, glad tidings), but its original reference is now lost upon us, it

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<sup>1</sup> G. Friedrich, "Euaggelion", *Theol. Dict. of NT*, vol. II, 722.

<sup>2</sup> G. Friedrich, *ibid*, 719.

does not evoke in us the reaction that David would have had.

## 2. Vatican II, especially the Decree *Ad Gentes*

The Second Vatican Council sought to represent the Gospel as Good News for man, as an answer to man's desiring, as joy in the fulfillment of the long-standing hopes of mankind. One of the ways it does this is by choosing new vocabulary. The Latin text still uses the word, *evangelium* (gospel), extensively. However, equivalents are introduced, one of which is the word *nuntium* (message, news).

The use in the Vatican documents is as follows:

<i>nuntium evangelicum</i>	- Gospel message (9 times)
<i>nuntium salutis</i>	- news of salvation (6 times)
<i>nuntium Christi</i>	- news of Christ (7 times)
Bonus nuntius Christi	- good news of Christ (twice).

This latter, which occurs in *PC* 25 and *GS* 58 but never in *Ad Gentes* becomes a very common designation of the Gospel in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Redemptoris Missio*. Further, the phrase, *evangelium nuntiare* (Abbot: to proclaim the Gospel; Flannery: to preach the Gospel) occurs only twice in the Decree, *Ad Gentes*, (*AG* 1; 24) - in both cases a missionary situation is in view. The verb, *nuntiare*, has a missionary flavour; it is specific to the missionary situation without being foreign to the pastoral situation of the church.

It was in the Council that the term, *evangelizatio*, became current. It occurs thirty-one times in the entire Council documents, twenty-one of which are in *Ad Gentes*. Hence, in the mind-set of the Fathers, evangelization is specific to the church's missionary activity while also designating the entire activity of the church. In other words, what is usually covered by the term, "first evangelization" can be called simply "evangeli-

zation" in the usage of *Ad Gentes*. Nevertheless, this document does distinguish three stages in evangelization (AG 6): initial, progressive and full. Initial evangelization is done by heralds of the Gospel who announce the glad tidings among the nations (*annuntians evangelium in gentibus* AG, 24).

### 3. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

The problematic of *Ad Gentes* was to link missiology to ecclesiology, to rediscover the foundations of specific missionary activity in the one mission of Christ and of the Church. In the ten years between the end of the Council and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* new questions of priority arose. The late 60's saw Puebla and liberation theology; the 1971 Synod singled out integral liberation and action for justice and peace as constitutive elements of evangelization. Theologians, particularly in Asia, insisted on dialogue as a way of mission. It was the concern of Paul VI to show the inter-connectedness of the various elements in evangelization:

"evangelization is a complex process involving many elements, as for example, a renewal of human nature, witness, public proclamation, wholehearted acceptance of, and entrance into, the community of the church, the adoption of outward signs and of apostolic works" (EN, 24).

Evangelization aims at interior transformation, newness, conversion of individual and collective consciences (no. 18). This double concern of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* induces, as it were, a studied avoidance of the terminology of mission. The word, "missionary" occurs twice; the word "missions" also twice. The phrase, missionary activity, (in Latin variously as *actio missionalis*, *novitas missionalis*, *labor missionalis*) occurs only five times. Nineteen seventy-four was the date of the debate on the



"moratorium".<sup>3</sup> Thus *Evangelii Nuntiandi* appears to highlight aspects of mission other than initial proclamation, but this is only what a superficial reading affords.

*Evangelium nuntiare* (proclaiming the Good News) which is rare in *Ad Gentes* becomes the signal tune of this Exhortation: it occurs over forty times. A new word enters the vocabulary: *nuntiatio* (thirteen times), translated in A. Flannery as "proclamation of the news" (*EN*, 22). In the Vatican II Council documents, the noun, *nuntium*, is never used absolutely; in *EN* it is so used twenty-three times. Also "*bonus nuntius*" stands eleven times for the Gospel - actually a translation of the two elements in the word *eu-aggelion* (good news).

*Redemptoris Missio* will go further: it will translate the joyful element, hence *laetus nuntius*, *RM*, 21 (glad tidings). *Evangelium nuntiare* or simply *nuntiatio* is the entire activity of the church, nevertheless *nuntiatio* is designated in no. 22 as *kerygma* (initial preaching and catechesis). In nos. 51 - 52 it is called *prima nuntiatio* (first proclamation) directed primarily towards those who have not heard the good news of Jesus or to children and non-believers in a de-Christianised setting.

The adjective, "first" is explained in no. 51: with reference to grades, it is evangelisation in its initial stages (*quoad gradum, versans in initiis et nondum plena*). "First" thus links up with subsequent stages of evangelization all considered from the one aspect of proclamation (see also *primus nuntius* in no. 45). The other stages are baptism and the other sacraments (no. 17), evangelization of culture (no. 20), subsequent handing on of the message in missionary activity (no. 18). The Spiritan Rule of Life indicates the same reality in 13.1: mission as

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<sup>3</sup> This call by some African theologians can be seen in AFER XVI (1974) 331. It was countered by the Bishops of Africa and Madagascar at the end of the 1974 Synod.

proclamation (*announce*) and founding of new churches. In *EN*, 52, Paul VI evokes the term *prae-evangelizatio*, as equivalent of *prima nuntiatio*. Hence this is not the pre-evangelization of missiologists of the 60's who postulated a period of development and up-lifting of a culture **before** any proper evangelising activity should begin. This idea was sometimes linked to the idea of "western culture" as a necessary vehicle of the faith. "First proclamation" has nothing to do with pre-evangelization in this sense.

#### 4. *Redemptoris Missio*

With *Redemptoris Missio*, the terminology of mission is back in force: peoples everywhere, open your doors to Christ! (nos. 3; 39), the mission to the nations is still in its infancy! (nos. 1, 3; 40). The term, *missionarius* occurs over one hundred and seventeen times; the adjective, *missionalis*, one hundred and thirty-five times; mission, one hundred and twenty-seven times;<sup>4</sup> the "missions" thirteen times. The Encyclical is written to give a new missionary thrust to the Church, mission understood in the specific sense of activity directed "to the nations". It is interesting that the Pope considers Asia a prime target of this mission "to the nations" (*RM*, 37) - some missiologists saw Asia as the domain of dialogue. Of course, the Pope (*RM*, 42f) accepts witness (with *EN* 21 and 41) as essential in any evangelization; often the very first step it is in some situations the only one possible.

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<sup>4</sup> Applied to the Trinity 12 times; as worldwide mission (*universalis missio*) 20 times; as mission 95 times.

In the Bible, "the nations" often meant the Gentiles as compared with the Jews.<sup>5</sup> However, in the various versions of the "missionary mandate", "the nations" refers to all in need of Christ: "go ... make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28: 18 - 20).<sup>6</sup> The Encyclical refers explicitly to this latter usage (*RM*, 22), and interprets "the nations" as non-Christians and non-believers. This gives a double thrust to the church's missionary ardour-mission "to the nations" directed to non-Christians, and "new evangelization" directed to the non-practicing; priority belongs to mission "to the nations".<sup>7</sup>

When witness and dialogue of life of the Christian community are seen as necessary elements in proclamation, there can be no distinction between an approach to the so-called world religions and that of the traditional religions. Christ must be preached to all both in word and in the life and practice of the Christian community.

The Pope is concerned that this specific missionary activity appears to be waning (*RM*, 2). He refers to questions being asked in some circles: has not mission been replaced by inter-religious dialogue? Does not respect for conscience and for freedom exclude all efforts at conversion? (*RM*, 4). Is not human development an adequate goal of the church's mission? Is not the Kingdom a socio-economic and political reality? (*RM*, 17).

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in Acts 13: 46: "we had to proclaim the word of God to you first but since you have rejected it, since you do not think yourselves worthy of eternal life, here and now we turn to the nations".

<sup>6</sup> See the other versions in Mk. 16: 15, Lk. 24: 47; Acts 1: 8.

<sup>7</sup> Older churches may not use involvement in "new evangelisation" as an excuse to slacken their drive towards the non-Christian world (*RM*, 85), for the universal church and each individual church is sent forth "to the nations" (*RM*, 62).



In the period after *Evangelii Nuntiandi* a tendency arose to give the word, mission, so wide a meaning that it meant nothing specific. The New Code, c. 786 located specific missionary activity within the church's mission thus: "missionary activity properly so-called (*actio proprie missionalis*) whereby the church is founded amongst peoples or groups where it has not taken root before ... . Some theologians took other paths, for example, M. Amaladoss. In a paper read at the SEDOS Research Seminar, 1989 and published in SPIRITUS XXXI vol. 118 (February 1990) and SEDOS Bulletin, vol. 21, (15th December 1989) 353 - 361, hence the First World as priority target. RM 37a proffers an answer: it does not seem justified to regard as identical the situation of a people which has never known Jesus Christ and that of a people which has known Him, accepted Him and then rejected Him ... .

The Pope mentions approvingly the "repatriation" of the "missions" into the church's mission, but warns that to say that the whole church is missionary does not preclude the existence of a specific mission "to the nations" (RM, 32) *Ad Gentes* referred mission back to the church, *Redemptoris Missio* pushes the church outwards towards mission.

The operative terminology of *Redemptoris Missio* is the term, mission: it designates **both** the entire activity of the church **and** a specific activity directed to non-Christians. This latter activity is further distinguished as follows:

- mission "to the nations" (*passim*)
- specific missionary activity (*actio missionalis specifica*)<sup>8</sup>
- properly missionary task (*munus proprie missionarium*)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> RM, 32, 34, 37.

<sup>9</sup> RM, 31, 34.

- proper missionary activity (*actio proprie missionalis*) <sup>10</sup>
- missionary evangelization (*evangelizatio missionalis*, RM, 2).

It is further characterised as *nuntium* (proclamation of the message) which leads to conversion (RM, 20) such that *fides ex nuntio oritur*, RM, 44, (faith comes from proclamation). In relation to subsequent stages or rather subsequent audiences, (*Redemptoris missio* rather applies the category of audience; <sup>11</sup>) it is characterised as follows:

- *primus nuntius* - first announcing of the message (RM, 44; 85)
- *primum Christi nuntium* - first news of Christ (RM, 40)
- *primus Christi Salvatoris nuntius* - first preaching of Christ the Saviour (RM, 44)
- *prima nuntiatio* - first or initial proclamation (RM, 51)
- *prior evangelizatio* - first evangelization (RM, 37)
- *prima missio ad gentes* - first mission "to the nations" (RM, 30).

This last designation is interesting because there is a mission "to the nations" which is first and hence a mission "to the nations" which is second, that is "new evangelization".

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<sup>10</sup> RM, 48, 72. This is the terminology of canon 786.

<sup>11</sup> The three audiences are delineated after (nos. 3, 30, 34, 37 and passion) as follows:

- |                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| non-Christians | - mission "to the nations" |
| Christians     | - pastoral care            |
| non-practising | - new evangelization.      |

## Conclusion

How then is the term, "first evangelization" to be understood, or should it be dropped? I have been at pains to show that the term has different equivalents in different thought patterns, namely, evangelization, initial evangelization, missionary evangelization, proclamation, or first proclamation, first announcing (that is, of the message), mission "to the nations", even first mission "to the nations". In the Spiritan Rule of Life, 13.1 the term is *announce* (proclamation). There is a wide choice of terms. What they designate seems clear, namely, "people, groups and individuals who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel, or who have scarcely heard it (SRL, 4). Seen as activity, it concentrates on proclamation of the message (*kerygma*), catechesis and inculturation, even if other aspects of the church's mission must be present. If the term, evangelization is kept, perhaps "missionary evangelization" (RM, 2), would meet with the least objection; if mission, then mission "to the nations" may win out in the end although it is meeting with some resistance.

The Spiritan Rule of Life reflects the usage of *Evangelii Nuntianti*, hence tries to preserve balance between the various elements in the church's mission. However, just as in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, an aspect of mission general to the church is predicated as particular to us. Spiritans are "set apart" as Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13: 2 for the mission to the nations (SRL, 1). Like Christ, they have been consecrated to proclaim good news to the "poor" (inscription citing Lk. 4: 18; no. 4) which news, in the wake of Christ, is the good news of the Reign of God (SRL, 1). The word-group, *announce/announcer*, (Inscription, nos. 1, 3, 13.1), has the same *double-entendre* as *nuntiatio/nuntiare*, namely, it refers to **both** preaching the Gospel and the specific proclamation in situations of initial evangelization, but giving primacy to the latter. In this connection, it is striking that the word, missionary, occurs in the Rule (French text) only



twice, (nos. 2, 136.1) just as in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*! At no. 2, the Daly-Thibault text had it, but the later Drafts substituted the word "apostolic". During the 1986 Chapter, the debate continued till almost towards the end - "missionary" was accepted only when 13.1 relativised it by outlining and making our own the current stresses in mission. A comparison of SRL, 13,.1 with Mgr H. Teissier's book, *La mission de l'Eglise*, (Paris, Desclée: 1985) is enlightening.

## Teissier, p. 74

## SRL, 13.1

-la Mission, comme service  
de l'homme;

-la Mission, comme service  
et libération de l'homme;

-la Mission, comme dialogue  
avec les autres croyants;

-la Mission, comme  
dialogue;

-la Mission, comme accultura-  
tion du Message dans chaque  
Eglise locale;

-la Mission, comme incultu-  
ration du Message dans  
chaque Eglise locale;

-la Mission, comme fondation de  
nouvelles Eglises.

-la Mission, comme  
annonce de l'Evangile  
et de fondation de  
nouvelles Eglises.<sup>12</sup>

The similarity in diction, phrasing and even punctuation and the use of capitals is telling. The addition, *annonce de l'Evangile*, (proclamation of the Good News) refers back to the same phrase in nos. 1 and 3, and is used in Teissier's book in both the wide and restricted senses outlined above.

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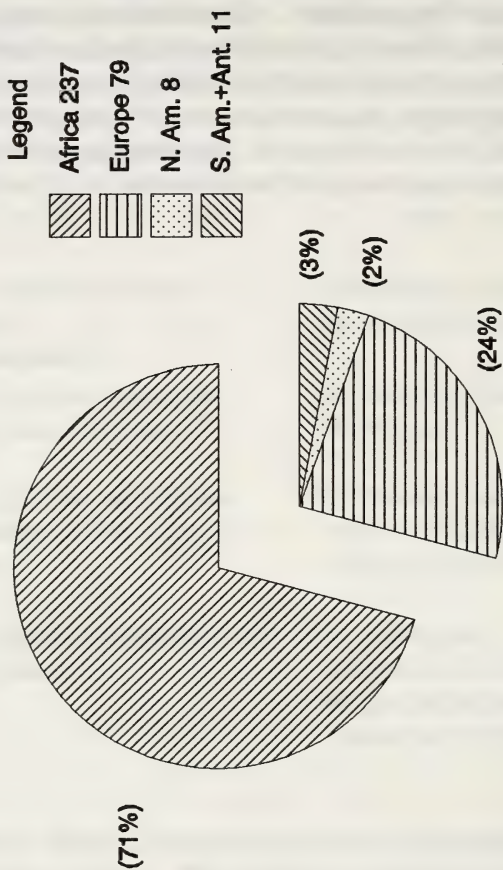
<sup>12</sup> The meaning of the addition, *annonce de l'Evangile*, is clear in other sections of the book and corresponds to our interpretation above.

If, as in SRL 13.1 "we take as our own the points that the church is currently stressing in mission", then *Redemptoris Missio* invites us to a deeper commitment to first evangelisation or mission "to the nations". Providentially, even before the Encyclical, the General Council had called a meeting of confreres engaged in this activity specific to us as a missionary institute. Judging by the enthusiasm of confreres involved and the quality of their submissions, the November meeting should be a very good exchange of experiences and perspectives.

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**Rome**

# The Congregation of Tomorrow

Professed in Formation



General Bulletin Vol. LVI, No 780.



## EDUCATION

### FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

In an address to Catholic educators, Bishop Ricardo Ramirez of Las Cruces, New Mexico, asked his audience to consider what would happen if the fifty-two million Catholics in the United States were "educated and mobilized" to promote economic justice for all.<sup>1</sup> The bishop's provocative question is clearly addressed to Spiritans, especially to those who share the mission and responsibility for the quality and orientation of education.

As professional educators serving not only in this country, but also in fifteen other First World countries of the North and in so-called Third World countries of the South, we might ask ourselves a cognate question, focusing the challenge of Bishop Ramirez even more sharply upon ourselves: What would happen if all of our students everywhere were educated and mobilized to promote economic justice for all? From a different vantage point the question is this: Are we in all our educational institutions, and in every area of learning, preparing our students to be promoters and defenders of justice worldwide?

My aim in this paper is to respond to the last question, by offering three reasons why our particular educational endeavors should be oriented or reoriented in accord with the theme of education and mobilization for justice? Such a goal is certainly not a top priority, not even a major theme reflected throughout the curriculum, in any of the schools I have seen during my

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<sup>1</sup> Ricardo Ramirez, *The Response of Catholic Educators to Poverty*, in *ORIGINS*, vol. 17, no. 4 (March 31st, 1988), p. 723.

long experience as a Spiritan educator at the first, second and third levels of academic activity in the United States and in Africa.

My reasons for a positive answer to our key question are presented under these headings: (1) The Spiritan Vocation, (2) Catholic Social Teachings, and (3) The Relevant Indicators of Poverty in our global village. These reasons are followed by Some Implications and Conclusions.

## The Spiritan Vocation

As Spiritan educators, we belong to an international organization -- multi-national and transnational. Our organization or Congregation defines itself traditionally and officially in terms of justice, and with a priority concern for the most disadvantaged segments of the world population. In the words of our **Spiritan Rule of Life**, "We give preference to an apostolate that takes us to ... those oppressed and most disadvantaged, as a group or as individuals" (No. 12). Boldly, in the words of our Rule of 1849, we call ourselves "the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them" (No. 14). Moreover, "In order to contribute effectively to the promotion of 'justice', our ministry necessarily requires of us 'every effort to analyze situations (of injustice), to lay bare the relationship of individual cases to structural causes'" (Ibid. No. 14), in accord with the Church's official and much neglected social teachings. This sort of analysis is manifestly an educational enterprise, multifaceted and far reaching in its implications.

In view of the values and concerns given priority at our last general chapter, and in light of the signs of the times in which we live, we can no longer stand by piously as more than eight hundred million citizens of our global village languish in

absolute poverty and nearly half a billion persons\* are chronically hungry.<sup>2</sup> Even in a wealthy country like the United States, notably since the beginning of the Reagan decade, the number of poor families increased dramatically, the middle-class became downwardly mobile, and the minority of very rich families became progressively richer.<sup>3</sup> Add to this the shameful fact that, in this affluent land, twenty per cent of all children live in poverty, one out of two black children, and two out of three Hispanics.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the estimated number of homeless children in the United States is five hundred thousand - and growing rapidly.

Still, the trickle-down theory in economics is widely and uncritically accepted even by its North American victims; indeed, it is being propagated worldwide, with fundamentalist missionary zeal, together with its hyper-individualism and vulgar consumerism. The Catholic moral teachings related to sex are well known. But how well known are the Catholic moral teachings related to the proliferating culture of greed, characterized by Pope John Paul II, as insatiable in its "desire for profit" and its "thirst for power" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 37).

In keeping with the orientations initiated by Vatican II, and reaffirmed in numerous ecclesiastical directives, there is an obvious pastoral need to address the increasing poverty of humankind's vast majority. It no longer suffices to pray for the poor and respond to their needs with bursts of charity during

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<sup>2</sup> cf David Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace and Human Rights: An American Catholic Social Ethics in a Pluralistic Society*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1988), p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> cf Ramirez, above, pp. 722 - 723.

<sup>4</sup> cf Hollenbach, p. 83; also US Catholic Bishops' Campaign for Development, "Fact Sheet" (November, 1989).



periodic emergencies created by combinations of greed and hunger for power, which treat persons like anonymous and disposable pawns in a competitive game called "progress".<sup>5</sup> Ways must also be found to correct the systematic distortions and the unfair structures which are the sustaining causes of such human tragedies as the chronic malnourishment of children throughout the Third World, and even in parts of the First World.

An educated, well-informed and articulate "constituency of conscience" is an obvious preliminary to analyzing and correcting any of these situations. How many of our students today, for example, indeed how many of us, are able critically and coherently to discuss the Persian Gulf War in the light of our traditional Christian ethical principles? Our students may be very well informed about the dangers of "collective ideologies" such as communism. But how familiar are they with the official Catholic critique, offered by recent Popes, of the proliferating "ideologies of an individualistic nature that fail to correct the unjust distribution of national wealth and that conceive of the person as a self sufficient entity whose finality is his (or her) own interest ... without any consideration for the rights of others ... ." <sup>6</sup>

By reason of our own self-definition as Spiritans, we are expected to integrate into all of our ministries an unambiguous commitment to education and mobilization for the promotion of justice for all. Such "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world" is now officially recognized by our Church leaders as "a constitutive dimension

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<sup>5</sup> cf Edward Schillebeeckx, *God Among us: The Gospel Proclaimed*, trans. by John Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1987), p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> John Paul II, *Faith and Culture: Address to Peruvian Cultural Leaders*, in *ORIGINS*, vol. 18, no. 3 (June 1988), p. 35.

of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation".<sup>7</sup>

## Catholic Social Teachings

A fundamental guiding principle in this endeavor is the "preferential option for the poor", or the "preferential love for the poor", as these expressions are currently understood in the pastoral letters of the bishops of North, South and Central America, and in the social teachings of Pope John Paul II, who also speaks of the "preferential option for the most needy". In the view of the Holy Father, "one of the greatest injustices in the contemporary world consists precisely in this: that the ones who possess much are relatively few, and those who possess nothing are many" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 28).

The "preferential option for the most needy" is a matter of priority, viewpoint and perspective; it is not a call to serve poor people's interest exclusively. Education for justice is a service for all: rich, middle class and poor. It is education and action from the particular vantage point of the world's vast majority who are poor; it is education from a perspective of justice understood as fairness in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of life in our planetary village.

Nor should the issue be fudged by ideological rationalization designed to prolong some persistent hypocrisies, by saying that rich people are poor in a spiritual sense, hence in even greater need of our services than those who are poor materially. This spiritualized use of the words "poor" and

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<sup>7</sup> Synod of Bishops in Rome, 1971, in David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace and Liberation*, (New York: Doubleday/Image, 1977), p. 391f.

"poverty", evacuating the original content of the terms, is not the meaning they have in the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

In the relevant ecclesiastical documents, "the world's poor" are not some affluent minority on our planet, whose so called spiritual poverty is apt to be a consequence of their own life styles and distorted values. The Church's social doctrine is clearly, explicitly and primarily concerned with the palpable poverty of persons deprived -- by sinful social structures -- of basic necessities, equal services and fair opportunities in life. These are the people represented in the Bible by such terms as orphans, widows, lepers, beggars, captives, the lame, the halt, the blind, the least, the last and the lost. These are the New Testament types with first call on the compassion of Jesus.

While explaining the meaning and need for "ever new movements of solidarity" among the disadvantaged peoples of our time, Pope John Paul II said that such movements are "called for by the social degrading of the subject of work, by the exploitation of workers and by the growing areas of poverty and even hunger" (*Laborem Exercens* 6). According to the Holy Father, this "virtue of solidarity" is "diametrically opposed" to the "desire for profit" and the "thirst for power" still producing and sustaining the "structures of sin" which stubbornly prevent "a fair distribution of the good and services originally intended for all." So it is that perverse social institutions and inequitable economic systems continue to hinder the full development of humankind's vast majority. This is why the Church, "by virtue of her own evangelical duty, feels called to take her stand besides the poor, to discern the justice of their requests and to help satisfy them ..." (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*).

As another example of the meaning of "poor" in an ordinary ecclesiastical document, we cite a recent pastoral letter by the Catholic Bishops of Kenya, calling attention once more to "the



widening gap between the rich and poor", and noting that "the real problem is not only based on ethnic origins, but also the basis of two opposed 'economic tribes', namely the tribe of the rich (a small minority), who have amassed their wealth through dubious means, and the tribe of the poor (a massive majority)."<sup>8</sup>

## Relevant Indicators of Poverty

Such also is the meaning of "poor" in the documents of the United Nations dealing with wealth and poverty worldwide. The executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund sets forth the meaning of poverty in these stark terms:

*Forty thousand children have died today from a handful of common illnesses, usually combined with some degree of malnutrition. Over half of those deaths and most of that malnutrition, could have been prevented relatively easily and inexpensively.*

*For every child who has died today, several more now live on with ill health and poor growth ... . Among the survivors, half will either not go to school at all or will not stay long enough to become literate and numerate. This is not a threatened tragedy or an impending disaster. It happened yesterday; it is happening again today; and it will happen again tomorrow... .*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Catholic Bishops of Kenya, "Pastoral Letter on the Present Situation in Our Country", (June 21st, 1990), in *The Stand*, (Nairobi, June 22nd, 1990), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> James P. Grant, "Preface", *The World Summit for Children* (New York; UNICEF, 1990), p. iii.

According to the social scientists of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the relative poverty of peoples or nations or regions, is best recognized by comparing their under five mortality rates; that is, the annual number of children, per thousand live births, dying between birth and five years of age.<sup>10</sup> These rates are the surest indicators of real poverty. The empirical data tell us just which peoples in the world, in a given region or particular country, are poor, poorer and poorest.

Among the countries served by the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers, for example, we see that Angola is the poorest with a 1989 under five mortality rate out of 297 out of 1000 live births. Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, however, are very close second and third poorest.

Most of these children die from preventable illness. Diarrheas, measles and respiratory infections, usually in combination with malnutrition, are the biggest killers by far. In these countries of the South, the average life expectancy is no more than 45 years. Such high mortality rates signal what the United Nations documents call "absolute poverty".

This refers to the income level of families unable to afford a minimum nutritionally adequate diet plus essential non-food requirements for decent human living.<sup>11</sup> In sharp contrast, the rate of under five mortality in the Netherlands is only 8 out of 1000; followed by France and Canada each with an average of 9 out of 1000. The average life expectancy in these countries of the North is about 77 years.

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<sup>10</sup> cf UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 1991*, (Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 100 - 102.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 126.

## Some Implications

The Christian focus of concern has been emphasized repeatedly by Pope John Paul II. The final judgement scene in the Gospel of Matthew (25: 31 - 46) "must always be 'applied' to humankind's history", says the Holy Father: "it must always be the measure of human acts" (*Redemptor Hominis* 16). These least of our brothers and sisters are identified by the Pope, as "all who have been systematically excluded from a fair distribution of the good and services originally intended for all" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 10, 28). The Jesuit Superior General, reflecting the priorities proclaimed at their last general chapter, said that Jesuits "should make no significant decisions... without first thinking how it would impact on the least in society", not only in Western countries but globally. The promotion of justice requires "global thinking" said Father Kolvenbach, because "we who are missioned to build the Kingdom of God cannot remain limited to parochial and individual enthusiasms".<sup>12</sup>

The bishops of the United States speak about this in unmistakably concrete and political terms in their pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, where they ask some searching moral questions which we also might ask ourselves:

How will my economic decision to buy, sell, invest, divest, hire or fire, serve human dignity and the common good? What government policies should I support to attain the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable?

Does our economic system place more emphasis on the maximizing of profits than on

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<sup>12</sup> Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, *Themes of Jesuit University Education*, in *ORIGINS*, vol. 19, no. 6 (June 22nd, 1989), pp. 85, 86.



meeting human needs and fostering human dignity? Does our economy distribute its benefits equitably or does it concentrate power in the hands of a few? Does it adequately protect the environment and the nation's natural resources? Does it direct too many scarce resources to military purposes? (Nos. 32 and 132).

Many other questions are raised by the bishops in their effort to stimulate critical reflection and rational debate on the far reaching socio-economic and ethical implications of the dominant structures and systems of the modern world. Their aim is consciousness raising for the sake of reforming consciences in the light of Christianity's primordial mission of announcing good news to the poor, bringing light to the blind and liberation to captives.

### **Some Conclusions**

If we have the will to do so, it should be possible for us, Spiritan educators, everywhere to apply the foregoing principles in our educational ministry. If we are not already doing this, we could integrate and develop the foregoing questions in our actual classroom teachings and discussions, adapting them to the exigencies and particularities of the countries and regions in which we work. As a useful point of departure, some generally valid and universally urgent questions may be asked by Spiritans in every country. What, for example, does the economy of our particular country or region do for people here and abroad? What does it do to people? How do we participate in its institutions and systems? Who decides what is to be done? Who benefits from these decisions? Who bears the burdens? What can we do that would make a difference?

These are questions we must all meditate upon periodically, because we are called, in the words of the Bishops of the United States, to become a global "constituency of conscience", scrutinising and measuring social and economic policies by how they touch "the least, the lost, and the left-out among us".<sup>13</sup> Besides, our Spiritan vocation is, fundamentally, a matter of our bringing good news to the poor, teaching and speaking "in season and out" on their behalf; indeed, for the liberation of humankind from all forms of ignorance, ideological bondage, sinful social structures, and from every oppressive situation.

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**Kenya**

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<sup>13</sup> US Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, in ORIGINS, vol. 16, no. 24 (Nov. 27th, 1986), no. 27.





# PENTECOSTAL EXPANSION IN BRAZIL:

## A QUESTION FOR FORMATION

### A Fact

Pentecostal churches are growing at an explosive rate. They must, then be supplying some need felt by the economically crushed mass of the people. By comparison with these sects, the Catholic church is like a large, sick animal, unable to defend itself against the predators which tear off strips of its flesh. The Catholic church does not grow by conversions. It merely maintains itself through the birth-rate of its members - a birth-rate which is falling.

### What explains this expansion?

Where does the success of the Pentecostal churches come from? Why do they attract people so much? And why do Catholic parishes in general not attract people?

Firstly, the pentecostal churches are in the hands of *Brazilians*. The pastors are all Brazilians. They are quite at home in their role. They do not have doubts. Their strength comes from their having done little study. They are not like Catholic priests who have studied a lot and afterwards do not know how to speak to ordinary people. The pastors have no identity crisis. They radiate certainty.

Secondly, the Pentecostal churches are poor, or, better, they are *churches of the poor*, which are supported entirely by *their own resources*. Their members willingly pay tithes. They were

all Catholics before and grumbled at the "padre's" collections. The Pentecostals consider their church as really their own.

Thirdly, in Pentecostal churches the warm personal reception given each one stands out. At the door there is always a group to greet arrivals. In the Catholic parish anonymity is the rule. People go to arrange masses, weddings and baptisms and to obtain documents required by the church bureaucracy and which they get from a functionary in return for a fee. In most cases the parish office is a bureaucratic centre. The priests waste a lot of time on administration, on the sacramental servicing of people who afterwards disappear in the crowd. Of course, many priests like this: they would not know what to do if they had not this occupation. The priests are prisoners of their sacerdotal functions. This raises a serious question for the formation of young religious.

The popular Protestant churches do not have a bureaucracy. Instead of functionaries, they have missionaries. Everyone who comes is a potential convert: is received with interest.

Fourthly, as we have seen, the "crentes"<sup>1</sup> are all *missionary*. "Crentes" in name only do not exist, unlike the case of a majority of Catholics. They are missionaries. They persist, invite - even overdo it. They go out in search of the lost sheep, that is in search of the disoriented Catholics. They go out into the streets and squares, they knock on doors, they speak on the radio. They go by preference to prisons and hospitals. Usually Catholics who are ill in hospital receive no consolation from their church. But everyone who is sick is visited by the "crentes". The "crentes" received the word with power, they are

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<sup>1</sup> A Brazilian word meaning "believer", and popularly used to describe members of the Evangelical or Pentecostal churches and sects.

impelled to transmit it.

In the "crente" churches *everyone has a name*. Each one feels important. The small group does exert a constant pressure on the members. Human warmth is fostered by every means, a feeling of belonging to one family of which one is a brother or sister.

### Other Aspects

The Catholic who turns "crente", undergoes a conversion experience, baptism in the Spirit. His or her deepest emotions are involved. This experience leads to a more *stable personality*.

Catholics on the peripheries of the cities live in tremendous instability, under the impact of modern culture and the media, in what amounts to a total disintegration of their religious world and of their values. People begin to live in a civilization which no longer has God for centre and desacralizes every institution and norm.

In becoming a "crente" a person *returns to traditional morality* and rejects the modern world, TV, consumerism, noisy music, relativism. He or she feels improved because of learning to read the Bible. They grasp a very simple message which is constantly repeated in preaching and church leaflets: Jesus is my Saviour! He has saved me from this world of perdition! He has power!

In this way the person becomes "someone" again; gains *assurance*. The crentes are sure of themselves. To such an extent that even their physical appearance changes.



Pentecostal religion is very *simple*. It has not got twenty centuries of tradition behind it -- theology, structures and devotions to be respected. To become a *crente* is felt to be a step forwards: to be embracing a more spiritual religion. Material pictures and statues are passionately rejected, and only the Word of the Lord is believed in. It is also a very *emotive* religion: a lot of praise, joy, participation, music, tears. Worship is captivating, allowing people to pour out their souls, often in a real vocal therapy. These prayer-meetings may go on for hours and people do not feel the time pass. The *crentes* value *communication*: they invest in sound-systems and music, and prepare good readers and preachers.

According to the Pentecostals, the *power of God* is manifested in their worship. There are conversions, cures, miracles. There are personal testimonies to this power. According to these former Catholics, they never experienced anything like this. They say that it is in the Pentecostal church that they first met the "Living God."

## Questions

The "*crentes*" are *not afraid to speak*. This causes wonder. Formerly they were all Catholics. Then they were passive, shy, unsure of themselves. As soon as they become converted, they begin to speak, try to convince people, they become active and sure of themselves. They are no longer afraid. Where did this change come from? Is it not from the Holy Spirit?

In the Catholic church crowds of young people prepare for Confirmation. Each year there is a big new batch. Most of them are *reluctant listeners*, as are those forced to take part in pre-baptism courses, pre-marriage courses and the various catechism sessions. The Catholic church can always speak from a position of power. All very well, the young people are

confirmed and nothing changes: they continue to be passive and unsure of themselves. Whereas, the young people won over by a Pentecostal church soon appear as missionaries, leading other youngsters to the fold. What is the secret?

The central figure in the crente church is *the pastor*. There are many pastors and the number is increasing all the time. Anyone who has the gift of the word can be a pastor. He can start his church and begin to earn his living. Because there is financial reward. This encourages many to try to become pastors. Other ministers are also paid: the worker is worthy of his hire.

The pastor receives a rapid formation. He does not learn to doubt. He does not learn modern criticism. He just stays with the Bible. He has only certainties. To become a pastor is a *social step up*, but it does not separate the man from the world of the people. In the Catholic church, to become a priest means leaving the world of the people and entering another social class, another culture. The pastor, on the contrary, remains in the midst of the people. He does not know much more than the others. Above all, he has to be active if he is to have hearers.

The priest, when he is appointed to a parish, finds a whole structure already set up. Whether he works much or little does not substantially change his safe position. *The pastor has to win his flock*. The padre can wait: Catholics are brought to him. In order to be a Catholic, you just have to be born. In order to be a crente, you have to undergo a conversion. The pastor must win over his flock, one by one. Everything depends on him alone. He has no organization of power and support behind him.

It is significant that *one day these pastors were Catholics*. They had this vocation. But it was not used. While thousands of vocations go to waste, the Catholic church continues to pour

out streams of money and energy to form padres, the absolute priority of all pastoral plans. What is the result of this policy?

### **Pastoral Deadlock**

Let us take a look at the data: during the last twenty years in Brazil three thousand priests left the ministry; between 1967 and 1976, 1,908 left. The present average is of 75 leaving each year. After 1978 there is an increase in seminarists, reaching 130% more than in 1966. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of priests in Brazil fell, from 13,092 to 12,688. But in recent years the number began to increase, to 13,207 in 1985, and to 13,537 in 1987. On the other hand the population increased much faster still. The increase in the number of ordinations (about 400 a year at present) has changed the look of the clergy in Brazil: a greater number of young priests and of diocesan clergy - at present 43% of all priests - and a larger number of Brazilian priests (now 70% of the total).

In 1964 there were 12,793 priests for 80 million inhabitants, that is one priest per 6270 inhabitants. In 1980 the proportion was one priest for 9390 inhabitants. Today, with 13,537 priests and a population of 138 millions, we have a priest for 10,190 inhabitants (1987). There are areas where there is one priest for 50 or 60 thousand inhabitants!

There is one Catholic seminarian for a hundred candidates for pastor. The training of these latter is swift and simple, while the study of philosophy and theology takes many years. Most Catholic seminarians drop out of the seminary, something which does not happen with candidates for pastor.

Since the Plenary Council of the bishops of Latin America, in 1899, until today, the formation of a local clergy has been absolute priority. After a hundred years we have not yet got



there. On the contrary, we are falling farther behind all the time. To make up for the lack of local clergy, recourse is had to the *importation* of priests from abroad. Even with this the situation is worsening continually. The strategy of implanting in Brazil, European ecclesiastical structures, has not given the desired results. Many dioceses have not got even one single Brazilian priest. Is it not time to recognize the failure and to try to organize the church so as to answer our own needs?

While we persist on this road the bulk of Catholics are being worked on by thousands of pentecostal missionaries and pastors. They were all Catholics, but they did not find in the Catholic church space to realize their vocation. We have millions of potential lay missionaries - we still have. For how much longer? We do not make use of them. The church continues with a fixation about increasing the number of priestly vocations.

### Further Reflection

A few Catholics take an active part in some community or church movement. All the others are undefined Catholics, with a very weak connection to the church. *The Catholic church does not reach them.* It is from among these Catholics that the "crentes" win more and more adepts. Our communities lack a missionary spirit. There are areas and even whole towns in which the majority of the population is already "crente". It is true that this growth is partly explained by social and cultural factors which may change. Sooner or later the Pentecostal churches are going to enter into crisis; they are going to have to take a stand with regard to modernity. But, meanwhile, we in Latin America are witnessing a religious change involving more people than did the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the XVI Century.

The Catholic church has a heavy structure. It is very much controlled from the top. It is very clerical. As long as the juridical structure opens up no real place for them, the many lay men and women who could become missionaries among the people, will not feel inclined to come forward. They would have no sort of autonomy.

It is overwhelmingly women and children who take an active role in the Catholic church; they more easily accept clerical domination. A characteristic of the "crente" churches is the number of *men active* in them. A Catholic will not start up a community at a distance from his home church. Initiative must come from above.

Pentecostal churches are made up only of simple people. *There is no mixing of social classes*, as in the Catholic church. There are no intellectuals. In a crente church all alike share in the same medieval outlook on society and the world. They still live in a world in which the borderline between the possible and the impossible is hazy. Wonders may happen at any moment.

Pentecostal preaching *keeps close to the mentality of the ordinary people*, which is conservative and apocalyptic. No one "bores them to tears" with sermons about social problems. Life, day by day, has more than enough problems already. The world will not change anyway. Salvation is situated in the next life. There is nothing that we can do. The end is approaching.

The *shortage of pastoral agents* among the people is the weak point of the Catholic church. Direct and simple communication with the bulk of the people is lacking. We are wasting our time trying to train priests. The few whom we succeed in forming do not always manage to overcome the crises of identity and affectivity. We train them away from the true situation and far from the real needs of our church. In Brazil, as Joseph Comblin says, we would need a million grass-roots missionaries, trained

and supported (financially too) by the church. The vocations exist among the laity. Money to train and support them also exists. It would be enough to channel towards training lay leaders, some of what we spend on priestly formation.

How can we face up to this pastoral challenge? The Code of Canon Law itself (c.517,2) opens a path through the clerical structure, allowing even parishes to be confided to lay animators, under the supervision of a priest.

(To be continued...)

**António Gruyters**  
**Brasil**





CHAPTRE GENERAL - GENERAL CHAPTER 1992  
VILA KOSTKA, ITAICI, INDAIATUBA, SP, BRASIL

# THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVANGELISATION OF THE AMERICAS AND THE SPIRITAN CHAPTER 1992

In Europe as in America, preparations are afoot to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus on the Island of Hispaniola (San Domingo and Haiti), on the 12th of October, 1492. Columbus noted in his ship's log that the people of the island "would make good servants and that with 50 men we could subjugate them and make them completely subservient to us". The **conquest** of the continent was about to begin. So was its **evangelisation**; on board the caravelles were the first missionaries.

It was only in 1537 that Paul III's Bull *Veritas Ipsa*, declaring that the Amerindians were not only human but excellent neophytes, "eager to embrace the true faith", appeared. On the other hand, the colonial power in what became the United States ignored from the beginning the existence of a native people. By proclaiming that the country was virgin land which belonged to those who had just arrived to inhabit it, this power was establishing the ideology that underlay its culture: the only qualification necessary to become an American is the desire to be one, regardless of one's place of birth. But in 1790, Congress felt constrained to add that naturalisation applied only to those of white race. Can we indeed say that evangelisation brought with it The Good News?



## **A challenging event**

Given the historical context of the year 1991, the members of the Spiritan Chapter meeting at Vila Kostka, Itaici, Indaiatuba, in Brazil cannot be indifferent to the 500th anniversary. Like all the colonising countries of Europe, the Capitulants and the Church are brought face to face with this America. Many of us have already given some thought to this convergence. The topic was discussed at the meeting of major Superiors in Rome last September; the North American Superiors at their April 1991 meeting expressed the wish that the General Chapter of '92 should provide the occasion for a reflection which might take the form of an "examination of conscience" on the subject.

How should the 1992 Chapter observe or celebrate the double anniversary of the conquest and the evangelisation? All sorts of movements and organisations have begun to stake out their positions on this topic. Certainly we must not judge the events of the past according to our contemporary viewpoints. At the same time, we must be sensitive to modern attitudes which represent a refinement of the human conscience, grown more enlightened and more gospel-orientated.

What should our position be? Triumphant? Conscience-stricken? Defensive of the colonisers? Aware of (sympathetic to) the awakening of native peoples the world over? Eager to begin a "new evangelisation"?

## **A Matter For Everyone**

African Spiritans, like their confreres in the Americas, the Caribbean and in Europe, are aware of this anniversary. As a consequence of the "discovery" of these new worlds millions of Africans were carried off to the Caribbean and to North and South America. Thus, they too have played a role in this great



enterprise which has made possible the accumulation of wealth that has enriched the industries of the North.

In our times, five centuries after the discovery of America and after five centuries of evangelisation, a new form of bondage, more subtle but just as oppressive, underpins the wealth of the North: the huge and growing weight of debt (both capital and interest) which burdens the countries of the South. According to the World Bank, Third World debt which was 575 billion dollars in 1980 had reached 1390 billion in 1989. And yet, during this same period, the countries of the South made payments amounting to 830 billion dollars to the countries of the North. These repayments, far from easing the debt, seem to have had the opposite effect.

### **Spiritans identity offers possible solutions**

From their beginnings, Spiritans have regarded themselves as bringers of good news to the poor (Luke 4:18-19). The 1986 Rule of Life, quoting a statement of Libermann, thus describes us in a Church which has taken a "preferential option for the poor".

We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelisation: the "integral liberation" of people, action for justice and peace, and participation in development. It follows that we must make ourselves "the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones."

The history of the colonisation and evangelisation of this new world "discovered" by Christopher Columbus varies considerably both in approach and duration according to the colonising country. The actual and legal situation of native peoples, Afro-Americans and those of mixed race is likewise quite varied from one country to the next throughout the Americas. It would be

of great benefit to all the chapter delegates - and indeed to all their confreres - to become aware of the problems of justice and to the need for a change of mindset which is required in each geographic location.

### **Some Final Points**

For their next meeting in October 1991 Spiritan coordinators of Justice and Peace in Europe have chosen as their theme: "The Third World In Europe" (to which we could add and in Canada, the United States and Australia....), or "**The Return of the Caravelles**". The coordinators point out that thousands of refugees and immigrants arrive today in Europe, following the route of the explorers and missionaries in the opposite direction. They would like to explore ways in which the various Provinces can become more deeply involved in the pastoral reception and service of immigrants and refugees who arrive in the countries of the North.

At their April meeting the major Superiors of North America, Trinidad and Haiti rejected all forms of triumphalism regarding the 500th Anniversary of Evangelisation. They undertook, each in his own circumscription, to promote reflection on the situation of native peoples and of Afro-americans. They also proposed a theme (for this reflection): **The History of Sin and Grace in the Church of the Americas.**

**Bill Headley  
David Regan  
Maurice Gobeil**

## COMPTES RENDUS DE LIVRES SPIRITAN LIFE REVIEWS

O'CARROLL Michael, *VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS A Theological Encyclopedia of the Holy Spirit*, Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, A Michael Glazier Book, 1990, 232 p.

Recently, a review appeared in one of our religious magazines which dealt with a dictionary devoted to a theological subject. The author explained his choice of this method of treating his subject as having been suggested by his publisher.

The fact that the publisher is the same one who has published all four of Fr Michael O'Carroll's dictionaries leads me to suspect that the success of Fr O'Carroll's efforts has encouraged the extension of this approach to other authors in other fields. Whatever the validity of this reasoning, there can be little doubt as to the success of Fr O'Carroll's latest venture into the field of theological dictionaries. The subject is not the easiest one: many would feel that it is difficult to say much about the Holy Spirit beyond what is to be found in the pages of the

Scriptures; and even there, the references to the Spirit of the Lord are not always the easiest to interpret or the most obvious in their application to our own lives. However, this magisterial work, with its large format, more than one hundred and fifty entries, broad range and evidence of encyclopedic knowledge on the part of the author, is cause for celebration on the part of anyone who, as all Spiritans do at least in theory, wishes to see the theology of the Holy Spirit elucidated and Spiritan devotion enhanced.

As dictionaries are by nature fragmented rather than continuous, it is difficult to make generalisations about the way in which such works develop. Perhaps it would be better to try to give an impression of the dictionary by referring to the reactions of at least this reviewer as he perused its contents.

The huge amount of preparatory work in reading and sourcing references that such a text entails has already been mentioned. Again, since a dictionary involves a multitude of decisions about the



entries that are to be dealt with, one cannot fail to be fascinated by the evidence of the workings of the author's mind which these decisions provide. Thus, this reader was fascinated by the inclusion of a generous number of references to Orthodox theologians (the capital is intentional); by the entry under humour ("Humour is a part of life. As such it clearly may come under the influence of the Spirit..."), almost two columns in length; by a reference to the fact that, "as late as the seventeenth century, "[a]....prolific Marian theologian...was placed under some kind of "house arrest" for publishing books defending the doctrine" (of the Immaculate Conception). That one comes under the entry on **Infallibility**. There are lengthy entries under Maximilien Kolbe (though no reference to his heroic death) and under J.H.Newman. The author makes welcome reference to the activities of Pope Pius XII in saving the lives of Jews during the second world war; he is generous to the Quakers ("The popular name was first used as a gibe; it is now a word that evokes admiration and respect."); he includes businesslike articles on those resolutely English divines, William Barclay Swete and John Wesley. Truly, *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum*.

No self-respecting reviewer nowadays will confine himself to laudatory remarks. And there are some small reservations that should be mentioned. There are rare

instances of a certain awkwardness of expression: take a look at the sentence beginning "As with its exercise in the natural order..." in the article on Conscience. What is the meaning of the mysterious sentence which ends the entry on the great Pentecost sequence *Veni Sancte Spiritus*? What of the entries on Frank Duff and Edward Leen? One would have liked to know more of the author's mind on those two gigantic, if controversial, figures.

Minor quibbles, all. This superb collection contains more than most of us will ever acquire on our own time of useful knowledge about the third person of the Trinity, to whom we Spiritans owe a more than ordinary piety. The fourth in the series of dictionaries that Fr O'Carroll has compiled, it is another example of his immense erudition and plain hard work. It provides the kind of ready reference our hurried age demands. It will be a constant aid to harried homilists. It should stimulate further research by those of us whom it shames into a recognition of our own lack of knowledge about the theology of the Holy Spirit. Once more, Michael O'Carroll has put serious Christians in debt to his own zeal, learning and industry.

John D.Geary  
Rome

WEBER Ronald, *Scaling up Jacob's Ladder*, Trinidad, Servol Printing Services, 1990, 34 pp.

This is a booklet, not by a Spiritan, but about the work of a Spiritan with the underprivileged in Trinidad. After the Black Power riots in Trinidad in 1970, Fr. Gerard Pantin (brother of Archbishop Anthony Pantin of Port-of-Spain) decided to try to do something about the underlying causes of the riots, and got permission to give up his teaching post at St. Mary's College to devote himself full-time to the underprivileged. When he walked up Laventille Hill, a slum area on the outskirts of Port-of-Spain, on 8 September 1970, with Wes Hall, a well-known West Indian cricketer, and asked a group of idlers, "How can we help you?", he had no idea of what he would do or of how what he was starting would develop.

Now, 20 years later, what he began that day has indeed developed into a remarkable organization (SERVOL, SERvice VOLunteered for all) that has contributed a great deal to Trinidadian society and has spread its influence throughout the Caribbean and even further afield. Social workers from many parts of the world visit Trinidad to study the methods of SERVOL, and Fr. Pantin has been invited to speak about it in some 25 countries, including India, Australia, Kenya, Israel, France and Hungary.

*Scaling up Jacob's Ladder* was

written by Mr. Ron Weber, an American journalist, at the request of the Inter-American Foundation, which is one of several international funding agencies that have helped SERVOL over the years. He describes the main stages of SERVOL's development and tries to discover the secret of its success. One of its key principles is that one should never come with preconceived ideas about what is good or not good for the underprivileged, or what they need or do not need. One should give up one's "cultural arrogance, the unconscious belief that poor people are too stupid to know their own problems or solve them when given a chance". "Embracing a 'philosophy of ignorance', its own, SERVOL began by listening... A community that implements an idea genuinely its own, always takes another step forward. If the idea intrudes from outside, it may prosper for a while through the dedication of the outsider, but the development process does not continue for the simple reason that it never began... Fr. Pantin called this process 'respectful intervention'."

After getting the local people involved and helping in a couple of small projects, SERVOL opened its first community centre, St. Barbara's, in Laventille in 1971. It included a welding workshop as well as a day-care centre for small children and a medical consulting room, and from the beginning the interaction between the teenagers in the



workshop, the children and the parents began to give pointers for future development. A major step forward began in 1975, with the building, by the teenagers themselves under the guidance of their tutors, of a much larger centre, the Beetham Life Centre, on reclaimed land near Port-of-Spain. This centre was able to house several workshops (carpentry, electricity, welding, plumbing, masonry), a catering facility, medical, dental and legal consulting rooms, day care for infants and an outreach program for the elderly. It was officially opened in 1978. Here, as at "St. Barb's", the stress was also on the healing of the damaged psyches of the teenagers who had failed to make it in the island's official education system. All were given a 14-week psychological and morale-building course, as well as the year's course in technical skills. Social integration was stressed, and this was helped by the girls' programs in the same centre, and by the training for parenting (teenage boys looking after infants) and involvement in helping the elderly.

In 1980, a similar Life Centre was opened at Forres Park in central Trinidad, this time in an agricultural setting and for those of East Indian rather than African background. By this time, too, there were several infant schools, and in 1983 a Caribbean Life Centre was built in Port-of-Spain for the training of pre-school teachers, not only for Trinidad but for other Caribbean

islands. This has proved most successful, with its diplomas now sanctioned by Oxford University, and has extended the SERVOL philosophy throughout the West Indies.

SERVOL had grown largely through the work of volunteers, including professional men and women such as doctors, dentists, lawyers and architects (though there were also nearly 100 paid employees), and had been backed by international funding agencies, but in 1986 there was a change of government in Trinidad, and the new government recognized the organization's achievement by asking it to cooperate formally with the Ministry of Education in developing a program both for pre-school children and for dropout teenagers. Under this scheme, 120 infant schools have already been set up, as well as some technical training centres, and more of both are projected. The growth has not been without strains, however, as the Government would like quick results, whereas the SERVOL philosophy of listening and promoting inner healing takes more time.

Fr. Pantin himself has written three books on SERVOL: *A Mole Cricket called Servol* (1980), *The Silent Prophet* (1982) and *The Servol Village* (1984); and his deputy director, Sister Ruth Montrichard, of the Cluny Sisters, has written *Servol faces the Eighties* (1981).

**Roland Quesnel**  
**Rome**



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